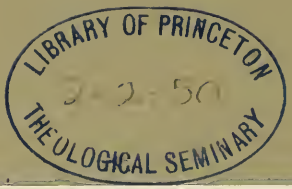


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The witness of St. John to Christ

# THE BOYLE LECTURES

For 1870

RIVINGTONS

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# THE WITNESS OF ST. JOHN TO CHRIST

Being the Boyle Lectures for 1870

*WITH AN APPENDIX*

ON THE AUTHORSHIP AND INTEGRITY OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL AND THE UNITY OF THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS

BY THE

REV. STANLEY LEATHES, M.A.

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RIVINGTONS

London, Oxford, and Cambridge

1870

# EXTRACT

FROM

## A CODICIL TO THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE

## HONOURABLE ROBERT BOYLE Esq.,

Dated July 28, 1691.

"WHEREAS I have an intention to settle in my lifetime the sum of Fifty Pounds per annum for ever, or at least for a considerable number of years, to be for an annual salary for some learned Divine or Preaching Minister, from time to time to be elected and resident within the city of London or circuit of the Bills of Mortality, who shall be enjoined to perform the offices following, viz.— To preach Eight Sermons in the year, for Proving the Christian Religion against notorious Infidels, viz. Atheists, Theists, Pagans, Jews, and Mahometans, not descending lower to any controversies that are among Christians themselves; these Lectures to be on the first Monday of the respective months of January, February, March, April, May, September, October, November, in such church as my trustees herein named shall from time to time appoint; to be assisting to all Companies, and encouraging of

them in any undertaking for Propagating the Christian Religion in foreign parts ; to be ready to satisfy such real scruples as any may have concerning these matters, and to answer such new objections and difficulties as may be started, to which good answers have not yet been made. . . . . I will that after my death Sir John Rotherham, Sergeant-at-Law, Sir Henry Ashurst, of London, Knight and Baronet, Thomas Tennison, Doctor in Divinity, and John Evelyn, sen., Esq., and the survivors or survivor of them, and such person or persons as the survivor of them shall appoint to succeed in the following trust, shall have the election and nomination of such Lecturer, and also shall and may constitute and appoint him for any term not exceeding three years, and at the end of such term shall make a new election and appointment of the same or any other learned Minister of the Gospel, residing within the City of London or extent of the Bills of Mortality, at their discretions."

[Note.—By an arrangement of the Bishop of London, the Boyle Lectures are now delivered annually at the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, in the afternoons of Sundays after Easter, at the discretion of the Preacher. The delivery of the following Lectures commenced the Second Sunday after Easter, and terminated the First Sunday after Trinity.]

# PREFACE

I HAVE tried in these Lectures to take a common-sense view of the most extreme position in which a school of modern criticism has endeavoured to place the Gospel of St. John. Even supposing that position could be established as correct, it would not by any means follow that the deadly blow had been struck at our received Christianity, which some apprehend, and others would have us believe. If, indeed, we start with certain foregone conclusions about the nature of Inspiration, it may be fatal to any such notions to find one of the conditions unfulfilled without which the idea of Inspiration can scarcely be maintained. For to believe that intentional forgery was compatible with any degree of Inspiration, properly so-called, in the mind of the person forging, would surely not be possible. And yet this must be the case

if it could be proved or shown to be highly probable that the Gospel of St. John, as an inspired production, had been written in the middle or latter half of the second century.

For upon that supposition the inference is unavoidable that the Writer pretended either to be an eye-witness or else to have received his information from an eye-witness, of the death of Christ. In the former case he told a lie; in the latter he may have done so, and most probably did. For a man writing, A.D. 150, can barely have had personal communication with one who had been an eye-witness of events that happened A.D. 34. For instance, we may assume the Evangelist to have been fifty years old at the time of writing, which is perhaps a maximum age: he must, then, have been at the very least fifteen when he received the information he recorded. But the supposed eye-witness can hardly have been much less than five-and-twenty when he was present at the crucifixion, certainly not if he was one of the Twelve.[1] This would make him

[1] The eye-witness may, of course, have been an indifferent person, and he may have been himself only a boy of fifteen at the time; but all these additional suppositions are attended with

at the time of his presumed intercourse with the Writer no less than a hundred and six, certainly by no means an impossible age, but one which, taken together with the other contingencies, is not very probable. At least we may affirm that had this been the case, a writer so minutely particular as the fourth Evangelist would have been very likely to enlarge upon the circumstance of the extreme old age of his informant, if not of his own corresponding youth, and most probably would have done so.

But more than this, suppose we allow the possible variation of another ten years in the above reckoning, yet the improbability of the case is not exhausted here. Because in every page of the fourth Gospel there is so much of detailed narrative that it cannot possibly be accounted for by the supposed intercourse of a boy of fifteen with a man of ninety-six or even of eighty-

additional improbability. We must at all events conceive of a boy of fifteen living to the age of eighty-six, and then meeting with another boy of fifteen to whom he related certain details of the crucifixion, which, forty-five years afterwards, were woven into a narrative, composed A.D. 150. A concatenation of circumstances clearly quite possible, but, all things considered, not very probable.

six (in itself, under the circumstances, highly improbable), but must necessarily be referred to a desire, on the part of the Writer, to seem to have minute personal information on the subjects of which he treated. That is, in other words, it can only be ascribed to an intentional deception on his part; because, upon the hypothesis any such personal information he cannot have had. The only question, therefore, which can arise is, whether or not circumstances are conceivable in which a deception of this kind would have been excusable. And it is certain that this question can be answered in the affirmative, only upon a recognition of the principle that the end justifies the means.

Now, let us try to look at this matter in the Writer's point of view. He was himself devotedly attached to the memory of Jesus. He believed Him to have been Divine. He believed that He was, notwithstanding His ignominious death, still alive. He was very anxious to bring others to the same belief. And he thought, it is supposed, that if he wrote an ideal narrative of the life of Jesus, in which he depicted His

character as he had himself conceived it, and attempted to heighten the reality of his portrait by saying that some of his materials had been derived from the relation of an eye-witness, he would do good service to the cause of his Master, and to the cause of truth, because in his opinion the two were identical. He thought, that is, that he could do something to advance the kingdom of the truth, which was his Master's kingdom, by the composition of a work which in its very principle was a violation of the fundamental laws of that kingdom; or, in other and simpler language, by writing a romance.

Nor can we for a moment dispute the propriety of his undertaking to put forth a work of this nature, having for its object the inculcation of high moral teaching and a lofty conception of the character of Jesus—*if this was really what he did.* And assuredly in that case everything of truth which his work was designed to teach would be equally valuable in a didactic point of view, whether or not he openly declared his object: in some sense, indeed, it might be more valuable if he could conceal the true nature of his work, than

if he did not attempt to do so; only, then, in either case, and this is the point, it could not pretend to be anything else than a romance; it might, indeed, be founded upon truth, as it no doubt was, but still it would be nothing more than a romance. Now, we do not say it is absolutely impossible that St. John's Gospel should be a romance; that is altogether another question; but we do most distinctly affirm that if it was produced under these conditions, it was and could have been nothing but a romance.

Let it be observed, then, that Inspiration is not first postulated, in order to show the improbability of the fourth Gospel being a romance; but the conditions, under which alone it could be a romance, are simply estimated on their own merits and judged accordingly. And, then, it is shown to be inherently improbable that the fourth Gospel is a production of this kind. There are so many improbable contingencies to be assumed before this conclusion can be drawn, that it becomes in itself highly improbable. Whether or not the fourth Gospel, not being a romance, is also an inspired production, is a totally inde-

pendent question with which we have nothing now to do. It may so happen that when we fairly estimate the various circumstances of the only probable alternative position we may feel ourselves constrained to postulate, or at least to contemplate contingently, some influence of the nature of Inspiration as alone affording adequate explanation of the phenomena before us—but this is altogether another matter. Our own conclusions simply carry us thus far: If the fourth Gospel was written A.D. 150, then it must be a a romance; but it is a supposition of high antecedent improbability that it was written so late as the middle of the second century.

We forbear, then, to draw any inference from what may be conceived to be the *moral* attitude of the Writer's mind in this matter; for, on the supposition that he is an unknown person, it is hardly fair to do so. The only means open to us for such a purpose, are those supplied by the moral standard of the work itself, than which none can be higher. It is safer, and on the whole more satisfactory, to consider the matter-of-fact inferences which are actually consequent upon the

assumed hypothesis. And these are simply that a person existing, A.D. 150, cannot be supposed to have had such intercourse with an eye-witness of the crucifixion as the fourth Evangelist seems to have had, unless writing at the age of fifty or sixty he had been as a boy of fifteen associated with an eye-witness of that event, who was himself surviving at the age of one hundred and six, or ninety-six, or eighty-six. The respective ages are not absolutely improbable, but it is a matter of considerable doubt whether, supposing them to be correct, any such writer would *thus* have chronicled the circumstance after an interval of thirty-five or forty-five years. *And yet this is the conclusion which is demonstrably unavoidable.*[2]

[2] We may tabulate thus :—

| | Years old. | A.D. | | Years old. | A.D. | Years old. | A.D. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Eye-Witness, if 25 at 34, would be | | | 96 at 105, | | | 106 at 115 | |
| ,, | ,, 15 | ,, | ,, | 86 | ,, | 96 | ,, |
| The Writer, | ,, 60 at 150, | | ,, | 15 | ,, | 25 | ,, |
| ,, | ,, 50 | ,, | ,, | | ,, | 15 | ,, |
| | | | | Years. | | Years. | |
| The interval before writing, | | | ,, | 45 | ,, | 35 | ,, |

And the question of probability may be stated thus :—Is it more likely that the substance of the fourth Gospel, having been communicated (say) to a youth of nineteen by an old man of ninety, should have lain dormant in his memory for more than forty years, and at last produced the Gospel ; or, that the Gospel, having been first written (say) perhaps about A.D. 105, should have accidentally escaped more distinct and explicit allusion by Christian writers than appears to have actually fallen to its lot ?

On the other hand, we must bear in mind that the further the hypothetical date of A.D. 150 is shifted backwards, the nearer it approximates to the extreme limit at which a genuine Gospel of St. John is historically possible, and the more difficult it becomes to reconcile the existence of our fourth Gospel at such earlier date with the alleged absence of reference to it until much later on in the century. In fact, the hypothesis in question is self-destructive, when we find Theophilus of Antioch at an interval of less than thirty years after the proposed date, A.D. 150, appealing to a Gospel which came into existence *then* as the genuine production of St. John. Had that been the case, it could hardly have established its position in so short a time. That it had done so, is itself an argument for an earlier date; but if we accept an earlier date, we are at once brought nearer to what was probably the true date, besides being confronted with the fact that Justin Martyr, at A.D. 150, makes apparent reference to a work which must have been in existence then, but was at the same time a forgery. For, to suppose that, the fourth Gospel being in existence prior to A.D. 150, Justin Martyr, writing

as he then wrote, did not allude to it, is impossible. If Justin did not allude to the fourth Gospel, we can only suppose that both he and the writer of that Gospel made reference to some other work, whose very existence is imaginary.

On the whole, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the balance of probability is strongly in favour of an earlier origin for the fourth Gospel. And if this be so, the only course that is open to us as critics, is to accept the fact, and account for it as we may. The earlier the origin of this Gospel, the greater its value as a probable narrative of fact. It may well have been written in the last decade of the first century, or even in the first decade of the second, and yet have been the production of St. John. And the interval between either of these dates, and that of A.D. 150, represents the whole period of time that we have to bridge: surely not a very formidable chasm when we bear in mind the character of the age in which it occurs.

While, however, as it seems to us, this is a fair view of the actual case with respect to the fourth

Gospel, we have tried to construct the argument in the Lectures in entire independence of it. On the most extreme supposition, there are still certain elements in that Gospel which are indestructible. If it is even a romance, it is a romance that was written for a purpose—a very evident and declared purpose; and so being written the issue turns wholly upon the truth or falsehood of the conception embodied—the justice or injustice of the purpose aimed at. We may not say that this purpose is wrong, or this conception false, *because* the Gospel is a romance; for the very circumstance of its being written for such a purpose, as it clearly was, is at least a witness to the tenacity with which at that time the belief expressed in it was held, and to the zeal with which it was proclaimed; while the way in which the doctrine is inculcated is such as to appeal at all times to the intrinsic moral vitality which it claims to possess. The Gospel comes with its own independent message to every individual reader, and assures him that if he will but believe in the Person of whom it speaks he may *know* for himself the substantial truth of the message. That message will prove itself true to every believing heart.

It would not follow that the message was unreliable or the doctrine false, even if it could be proved that the Gospel was in the strictest sense a romance; that message would even then stand or fall on its own merits; and therefore it is obviously premature to depreciate the value of the message because, as is alleged, on critical grounds the Gospel after all *may* be nothing more than a romance. The message comes with its own witness to the truth, and all who will believe shall *know* that it is true. The further question, whether or not the form in which that message is couched is romantic is a separate and independent question, with which the intrinsic value of the message itself has nothing whatever to do; and it is a critical error to blend these questions.

The present writer, then, is most anxious to make his position clearly intelligible. He takes nothing for granted. He does not assume Inspiration. He does not assume that the fourth Gospel is genuine. He does not assume that its conception of Christ is true. But he does affirm that *if* its message is fraught with substantial

truth then certain results will follow. He believes, nay more, he is certain, that these results do follow ; and he finds upon critical and dispassionate investigation that there is even *a priori* reason why they should follow because of the very high probability, to say the least, that the fourth Gospel is a genuine production of the first century, and, in fact, of Apostolic origin.

To have done anything whatever towards establishing this position, or towards keeping separate and distinct the question of Johannine authorship and the question of intrinsic worth and verity, in reference to the fourth Gospel, will not be without its bearing on the maintenance of Christian truth in the present day. How far either of these objects has been achieved it is for the public to determine ; but in proportion to the success with which either has been gained the writer is thoroughly convinced that he will have contributed his quota towards carrying out that other great and important design which the excellent and pious founder of the Boyle Lectureship had in view. And in this belief he earnestly commends the labour of the

present and the two previous years to the favour and blessing of Almighty God, with the earnest prayer that it may be made by His grace truly to serve the cause of the great Head of the Church and the one Saviour of mankind.

*July* 6, 1870.

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# LECTURE I

## ST. JOHN A CREDIBLE WITNESS

ST. JOHN xix. 35

*"And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."*

THE subject we propose to take for the third and last series of these Lectures on the Boyle Foundation is THE WITNESS OF ST. JOHN TO CHRIST. We shall try to investigate the character of that testimony to Jesus and the main facts of the Gospel history which is borne by the writings tradition has handed down to us as those of St. John; though, indeed, the Gospel known by his name will principally be the field of our inquiry, and upon it we shall chiefly draw for the support of the argument we shall endeavour to construct.

And in doing this, it will be needful to make absolutely no demands which it may not be possible to satisfy, to assume no more than all will be ready to grant; but so to estimate the substantive value of the existing evidence as to enable us to

determine fairly the conclusions to be drawn therefrom.

For example, there is a document preserved to us among the treasures of ancient literature which is manifestly not of later origin than the second century; this is in order the fourth of our existing Gospels, and is known as that of St. John. What, then, is the value of this document? Let us try to estimate its value apart from all bias or predetermination in its favour. Suppose it is not earlier than the second century of the Christian era—that it was written towards the end rather than the beginning of that century—then what follows? First, that this writer, whoever he was, intended, beyond all doubt, to represent himself as an eye-witness of some of the events which he describes, as[1], for example, the piercing of the side at the crucifixion, for he says, "he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." It is

[1] Dr. Davidson, Introd. to the Study of N. T., 1868, ii. 436, says boldly, "The author of the gospel indicates that he was not "an eye-witness of the sufferings of Jesus in xix. 35," and again afterwards, "Ewald himself admits that *the author of the gospel* "(*i.e.* John, as he supposes) is alluded to by the younger friend "that wrote from his dictation, and thus that *he* is not equivalent "to an emphatic *I*." Now it must be borne in mind that xxi. 24 runs οὗτος ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων, καὶ γράψας ταῦτα. So that even *if* this verse is an addition of the elders of Ephesus it at least expresses their belief that the narrator and the writer were one. The only question is whether the eye-witness of the piercing of the side was the beloved disciple or a different person. If he was the same person these conclusions follow:—The writer was also the

virtually impossible to interpret these words otherwise than as those of a person who was professing to relate what he had himself witnessed. Consequently, if they were not earlier than the end of the second century, we are obliged to conclude either that the author was romancing, or else that he was endeavouring to impose upon his readers as being a person who in reality he was not[2].

Now, the supposition that the writer was romancing is capable of being tested to a very great degree by the consideration of features which are apparent on the surface of the work. For instance, it is scarcely within the limits of possibility to believe that the chapters which describe the last hours of the mortal life of Jesus are a romance. They are so vivid, so minutely circumstantial, and bear so manifestly the stamp of truth, that, to say the least, it is hard to believe they are not true in the sense of being a romance.

narrator; the narrator of the twenty-first chapter was also, in the opinion of the Ephesian elders, the narrator of the previous chapters; the narrator was the beloved disciple of Jesus; the beloved disciple was the eye-witness of the piercing of the side. These conclusions are fairly and necessarily deducible from the evidence of the Gospel itself, but they still leave unsolved the previous question, Who was the beloved disciple? And as they leave this the most important question of all unsolved, is it not a proof that the last two verses of the Gospel cannot have been added by the elders of the Church at Ephesus, for the simple reason that their only conceivable motive for adding them would have been frustrated by the indefiniteness of the addition? See also n. p. 11, *post*.

[2] See Appendix, Note A, where the subject is discussed at large.

It becomes, in fact, impossible to believe this when we take into consideration the emphatic assertion just referred to. No one writing a romance would thus step out of his way to vouch for incidents not bearing directly on his work as a whole, but merely having reference to a subordinate point in its development. Just as when the author of "Waverley" gives his own personal knowledge as the source from whence he has drawn certain particulars in his narrative, we trust him there on the credit of his own word[3], so when the writer of the fourth Gospel explicitly states that a certain event happened within the cognisance of his personal senses, we are bound, on all principles of historical or literary criticism, to accept his evidence, at any rate so far[4].

But, in point of fact, the case is much stronger here; for, with respect to the author of "Waverley," every such assertion is really an admission

[3] A friend has reminded me of the story of Thersander in Herodotus as a case in point: *Ταῦτα μὲν τοῦ Ὀρχομενίου Θερσάνδρου ἤκουον, καὶ τάδε πρὸς τούτοισι, ὡς αὐτὸς αὐτίκα λέγοι ταῦτα πρὸς ἀνθρώπους πρότερον ἢ γενέσθαι ἐν Πλαταιῇσι τὴν μάχην*, ix. 16. Upon this incident Mr. Grote remarks, "It is certainly one of the most curious revelations in the whole history; not merely as it brings forward the historian in his own personality, communicating with a personal friend of the Theban leaders, and thus provided with good means of information as to the general events of the campaign—but also as it discloses to us, on testimony not to be suspected, the real temper of the native Persians, and even of the chief men among them."—History, v. 214.

[4] This, of course, is on the assumption that by the eye-witness, xix. 25, is meant himself. But see Appendix.

on his part of the generally romantic character of the narrative which assumes the guise of history, but in the fourth Gospel a declaration such as this is practically a voucher for the trustworthiness of the whole. For it gives us, as it were, once and for all, the sources of information from which the narrator has collected his facts. He was present at the last hours of Jesus, he had been His companion at supper-time, he was one of the first to find the sepulchre empty, and he was present on one other occasion by the shore of the Sea of Galilee a little while before the Ascension[5]. It was on the authority of this personal experience that the writer recounted what he did. If he was romancing elsewhere, as in the discourses ascribed to Jesus or others, it is quite inconsistent with the character of any sort of writing to assume that he was so here. We have his own explicit acknowledgment that he is himself responsible for the accuracy of the facts he records[6]; they may be startling, but he is perfectly aware of their nature,

[5] It appears also that he had followed Him into the palace of the High Priest, St. John xviii. 15. But he is there called "another disciple."

[6] Dr. Davidson says, ii. 442, "It is plain that the author meant "his work to be taken for the apostle's. He intimates that he was an "immediate disciple of the Lord, *the beloved disciple*, who was none "other than the apostle John; and avoids all mention of the *name*." This virtually concedes the point on which the argument in the Lectures is based. On the supposition that the author wrote in the middle of the second century it is by no means plain that he meant his work to be taken for the Apostle John's, nor does it appear why it should be.

and wishes us to identify him with the person on whose authority they are recorded, and to include him in any verdict we may feel disposed to pronounce on them.

The supposition, therefore, that the narrative is as late as we have said, so far as it involves the idea of romancing on the part of the writer, is in the highest degree improbable, and could only be maintained on the existence of strong external evidence to render it probable, the absence of which, however, is notorious.

It would seem, moreover, that the essential requirements of romance are opposed to the truth of this hypothesis, for romance may be constructed in two ways. It may purport to be a narrative of the hero's personal experiences and adventures, and so be written in the first person, in which case it takes the reader into the writer's confidence, and makes him acquainted with the sentiments, hopes, and fears of the imaginary actor, according as they are affected by the evolution of incident. This is one kind of romance, but the fourth Gospel is clearly not of this kind.

There is, however, another kind of romance which purports to be a story told by the writer about another person with whom he has no connection, of whose life and opinions he gives such a sketch as imagination may supply, while he leaves the reader to conjecture the scenes that are omitted, and to exercise his ingenuity in unravel-

ling the thread of the narrative. The merit of this kind of romance consists in its verisimilitude, and the accuracy with which it keeps within the limits of the natural in sentiment, and the probable in circumstance. The defective character of the romance is at once betrayed, when the reader is carried into scenes and incidents which could not have been described except by an eye-witness, which the writer never professes to have been otherwise than in imagination. This is a species of romance entirely distinct from the other. But it is contrary to the principles of romance and the practice of romance-writers for the two species to be combined. And it is also clear that the Gospel of St. John cannot be referred to this second species of romance, for it does combine the characteristics of the two.

Where, however, such a combination as this is found to exist, the result is not romance but history. When the writer relates events on the authority of his own personal experience, it is of course possible that he may transgress the limits of actuality, but there can no longer be any doubt in the reader's mind as to the intentional character of the narrative. The writer desires his composition to pass for history; he does not mean it to be interpreted as romance; and so far as it is so interpreted, he has manifestly been unsuccessful. We are therefore warranted in saying that the features to which we have referred in the fourth

Gospel are, up to a certain point, an *a priori* evidence of an earlier origin for it than the second century.

Let us turn, however, now to the second supposition, which, upon this hypothesis, must be made. If the writer lived towards the end of the second century, he must have written on the assumption of a personality to which he had no right. It is absolutely impossible to avoid this conclusion. He wrote wishing to pass himself off as an eye-witness of many of the incidents which he recorded. He says he was an eye-witness, and he says it in order to gain credit with his readers, for he manifestly wishes and expects to be believed. It is indeed alleged[7] that this habit of impersonation was a common practice with early

[7] "It was a common practice to put forth a work under the cover "of a well-known name, to procure its readier acceptance. Such "was the method in which good men often conveyed their senti- "ments and taught the public. It is not our Western one, nor "does it fall in with modern notions of rigid morality. Being "theirs, however, it is but fair to judge them from their own point "of view. The end was unexceptionable; the means adopted were "in harmony with the prevailing notions of the time. Had the par- "ties believed these means to be wrong or immoral they would not "have adopted them. In their eyes they were right and per- "tinent. It should also be observed that the authors had no idea "of the use that would be made of their compositions by a rigid "separation of them into canonical and uncanonical; the former to "be taken as an infallible standard of faith, the latter not. "Neither apostles nor evangelists wrote as conscious organs of a "dictating or superintending Spirit; nor did they suppose them- "selves so far elevated above other spiritual men as to claim for "their writing a divine authority. They worked in the interests

Christian writers, and one that was adopted both in the Old and the New Testaments. We may, however, fairly question whether the practice was ever followed except in the case of a writer of whom genuine works were known to exist. Would any one, for instance, have ventured to write a Gospel, and ascribe it to a certain disciple, if it was not otherwise known or supposed that any Gospel had ever been written by such a disciple? If such a fictitious Gospel had been written, is it presumably possible that it would have been commonly received within a short time afterwards? The difficulty is greater in believing that this Gospel, having originated late in the second century, would soon have been generally accepted, as it is allowed to have been, than, on the supposition of its genuineness, it is to believe that it might nevertheless remain for a long time, comparatively speaking, unknown[8].

However, in estimating the probability of

" of truth, and as they thought they might best promote it."—Dr. Davidson, ii. 448. The true issue is one of historical credibility. It is unnecessary to cloud this issue with any questions touching inspiration. We may be sure that the author wrote expecting to have readers; that he expected these readers would believe what he said; and that he desired they should do so. Would this be a reasonable way of gaining their confidence, supposing his method to be detected, as was certainly not impossible?

[8] To assume that the fourth Gospel was written with the intention of its being supposed to be by the author of the Apocalypse, is to make an assumption which they have no right to make, who insist upon the differences between the Gospel and the Apocalypse as a reason for denying their common origin.

the present assumption, we must not forget the way in which the writer makes the impersonation alleged, which, indeed, is very remarkable. He does not claim to be St. John, or any one particular disciple, but only an eye-witness of his Master's glory, and that disciple whom Jesus loved. Surely, then, on the supposition of a late origin for the Gospel, many elements of improbability are added to the hypothesis which would represent an unknown writer as laying claim to identity with a particular person, who nevertheless is not distinctly specified, but most obscurely alluded to. How do we know who the disciple was whom Jesus loved, or who it was who lay on His breast at supper, but for the tradition which has ascribed the Gospel to St. John? We cannot identify him with that disciple but upon a belief in the accuracy of that tradition.

Now, it is quite unlikely that these minute particulars should have been handed down, for a period of 120 years or more, as characteristic of St. John, in such a concrete form as to become the substratum for the identity upon which the Gospel was framed. That is to say, in order to suppose that the Gospel was a late production of the second century, we must assume that a floating tradition had long existed to the effect that St. John had been the beloved disciple of Jesus, had lain on His breast at supper, had found the sepulchre empty — for this is not otherwise

known—and the like, and that this tradition had been seized by some unknown writer and made the point he aimed at in the forged identity upon which he based his claim to the world's attention and belief. "He that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe[9]," is the challenge of a man who, after all, gives us no clue to his recognition but the fact of his identity with the disciple whom Jesus loved, who also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, "Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee?" Is it more likely, then, that these traditions should have survived, as it were, in a disembodied form for almost a century and a

[9] Dr. Davidson says of this passage, Introd. to the Study of N. T., vol. ii. p. 436, "The identification of the *writer* (ἐκεῖνος) with "the *eye-witness* (ἑωρακώς) is neither logically nor grammatically "right in the verse, unless the words were, 'he that saw *bears* "*record*,' (μαρτυρεῖ) *i.e.*, bears witness now in the act of writing. "The past tense *bare record* points to an author who has already got "the testimony of an eye-witness, and refers to him as a credible "person." Let the reader judge of the fairness and accuracy of this with the Greek before him: καὶ ὁ ἑωρακὼς μεμαρτύρηκε, καὶ ἀληθινὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστιν ἡ μαρτυρία, κἀκεῖνος οἶδεν ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγει, ἵνα ὑμεῖς πιστεύσητε. Cf. St. John i. 32, 34, and Alford's note on vii. 29. Also note, *ante*, p. 2. It is remarkable that in xxi. 24 the present and the first aorist are in juxtaposition. The aorist indicated the act of writing just completed, the present the character of the testimony which was *abiding*. Surely, on Dr. Davidson's supposition, if ἐκεῖνος refers to the *writer*, the words ought to run, "and he (the writer) knoweth that he (the eye-witness) *said* or *hath said* true," &c. But is not the subject of οἶδεν and λέγει one and the same? Mr. Orr remarks, "Authenticity of John's Gospel," p. 57, "Here we have, on the part of a sacred writer, as solemn an affirmation as man can make as to a certain fact being actually witnessed. He does not

half, and at last have created the fourth Gospel, or that the fourth Gospel, being already in existence, should have been the means of preserving the traditions? For the only alternative supposition is preposterous, that the Gospel, coming into existence, as alleged, towards the end of the second century, was itself the origin of an interpretation which generated the tradition. And yet, if it was not so, it could not have been understood by those who first became acquainted with it. We may venture to affirm that there is a critical dilemma here involved of no inconsiderable magnitude.

The hypothesis, then, we are at present consider-

assert, indeed, that he himself witnessed the soldier's piercing the side of Jesus, but he does affirm most emphatically the trustworthiness of the evidence. Here is no question of coincidence. The question is, are we to believe this sacred writer when he pledges his veracity as to the truthfulness of the party whose evidence he records. The affirmation is made with no reference to the question of authenticity now before us. It refers solely to a question that had arisen in the early Church amongst Greek converts, whether Jesus Christ had actually "come in the flesh," or whether that body crucified on Calvary were not really a phantom. These men said that it was. This writer affirms this testimony in contradiction of them. We are now told that the book was written in order to magnify Jesus as the Divine Logos. Here its author writes to contradict a party who, for the purpose of doing so, denied his humanity. This writing emanates from Ephesus, where John lived, and who wrote letters to the same effect. The question, therefore, for the English reader is, simply, Had this writer John's authority, or at least the authority of an eye-witness, for this solemn affirmation? Or, does he make it on the authority of some legend or tradition, of whose truth he personally knew nothing?" See also Appendix, Note A.

ing distinctly shuts us up to a twofold position,—first, that the writer of the fourth Gospel, whoever he was, wished to pass for a disciple and an eye-witness of the life of Jesus; and, secondly, that he desired to pass for some one particular disciple and eye-witness. From whence it follows that the way in which he indicated his identity with this disciple implies the existence of certain traditions, which, however, are too minute and insignificant to have lasted for well-nigh a century and a half without the aid of some such record as this in which alone they are found; that the appearance, therefore, of this Gospel towards the close of the second century implies also the contemporaneous origin of a method of interpretation for which it is impossible to account in the absence of such traditions, and which in fact, as far as it went, was opposed to the very brief record of the character of St. John as one of the sons of thunder ascribed to him by the other Evangelists[1].

It seems, therefore, that we may fairly say that the hypothesis which assigns this Gospel to the latter half of the second century obliges us to affirm, that it is more probable that these traditions should exist and be preserved than that they should have been forgotten and lost; that on the first appearance of the Gospel the supposed author should at once have been known than that he should not have been recognised; that it is more

[1] St. Mark iii. 17. Cf. St. Matt. xx. 21. St. Luke ix. 54.

probable that the true author should be able to maintain his incognito than that he should fail in preserving it; that it is more probable that a document such as this appearing with no credentials, (for it manifestly had none except on the supposition we have dismissed as improbable), should forthwith be commonly accepted by the whole Christian body, when we know that many other documents were rejected, as the preface to the third Gospel seems to imply, than that it should make its way slowly and by degrees, and after a time only be adopted; and, finally, that it is more probable that this Gospel should be accepted for the *sole* reason that it appeared or was thought to be the work of St. John, which it nowhere purports to be, than that it should be questioned and rejected for the obvious reason that the identity, or at least the name, of the writer nowhere transpires.

Nor must we omit to take into account one other conspicuous feature in this matter, which is that the question now raised as to the authorship of this Gospel does not lie between St. John and any other disciple, but between St. John and no disciple at all; that is to say, not between St. John and one of the twelve, but between St. John and a person utterly unknown, who must have lived at least some two or three generations later. For the credibility of it does not depend upon the identity of the disciple whom Jesus loved with

the younger son of Zebedee, but upon his identity with any one Apostle or eye-witness of our Lord. If such a person were really the writer of this Gospel there can be no question whatever that its testimony would be greatly enhanced[2], and consequently, upon the hypothesis of its origin in the second century, we have not only to explain the imposition by which the writer passed himself off as an eye-witness, but also to answer the entirely independent question how he came to be identified with the Apostle *John*, for on the lowest calculation the chances were ten to one against it[3].

Nor is the difficulty of maintaining the supposition in point by any means exhausted. For we must take into consideration certain other facts which cannot be overlooked; for instance, that the author wrote with the full expectation of being believed, and that he wrote with a very high moral purpose. The possibility of his testimony being questioned on the simple ground of his authority being insufficient, (which it clearly would be if he were not, as he affirmed he was, an eye-witness), never for the moment seems to cross his mind. He is not careful to protect himself against the insult or the injury of doubt. He assumes not

[2] "The fourth gospel would certainly have greater authority if it "had been written by an apostle and eye-witness."—Dr. Davidson, ii. 449. However true this may be I have endeavoured to show that *all* the testimony of the fourth Gospel to Christ is not invalidated if it can be proved that St. John did not write it.

[3] See, however, Appendix, Note A.

that men will be incredulous but that they will believe[4]. "These things are written that ye might believe," is his own professed motive for writing. Upon what known principles of criticism are we to call in question this alleged motive? But if the alleged motive was the true one it becomes yet more difficult to reconcile that fact with the position of a man who was consciously playing a part which was nothing less than fatal to the simplicity of any such motive. He might, indeed, be writing that men might believe, but he must have known that were his disguise thrown off he was ministering not to their belief but to their incredulity.

And yet more is any such thought impossible to be maintained when we bear in mind the high moral purpose which is transparently clear throughout. He believed that for a dying world his testimony about Jesus was fraught with *life*. He knew from his own experience that if that testimony were accepted, its result would be nothing less than life; a moral and spiritual existence which was to be discovered nowhere else, and compared with which all other existence was an unreality. He may have been quite wrong in holding this belief, altogether visionary as to its

[4] Believe, that is, the substantive matter of what he relates, not believe in anything about *him;* he was indifferent as to whether or not men believed that he had been an eye-witness, except so far as that belief affected the credibility of the things related.

merits and effects; but, holding it, as he most unquestionably did, we are at a loss to reconcile that fact with the deliberate assumption on his part of a line of conduct not to be characterised otherwise than as a pious fraud—as a wilful attempt to pass for what he was not—for the sole purpose of persuading men to believe what he knew perfectly well was false. Because we must not forget that his alleged motive in writing refers not to what Jesus said, but to what He did. It is, therefore, the recorded *acts* of Jesus to which he appeals as calculated to beget that life which upon the supposition could have been nothing less than a known delusion; and by which, therefore, rather than by the discourses of Jesus, we must put to the test the sincerity of the writer's motive.

There is, moreover, one other significant point to be observed which is not without its bearing on the present argument, for striking as is the difference between this Evangelist and the others whose works are allowed to have been in existence when he wrote, yet there are many points common to him with them. And with respect to these points he evidently assumes an acquaintance on the part of his readers[5]; for example, the life and

[5] Davidson mentions the following particulars as similar in St. John and the Synoptists. The cleansing of the temple. The miraculous feeding of the multitude. Jesus walks on the sea. Jesus is anointed by a woman in Bethany. Jesus's public entry into Jerusalem. Jesus points out his betrayer. He foretells Peter's denial. His passion and resurrection.—ii. 356.

ministry of John the Baptist; the selection and number of our Lord's chosen disciples; the antagonism of the Pharisees; the main facts of our Lord's life and the like. Now the way in which these things are spoken of shows that the writer did not think it needful to enlarge upon them, because they were more or less familiar to his readers. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book[6]," is a tacit admission that they had been written by others, that they were recorded elsewhere, that it was therefore needless for the present writer to treat of them. But if so, this is also to some extent a recognition of the labours of others, an indication on the part of the writer that his purpose was rather to supplement than to supersede[7], an involuntary evidence, therefore, of conscious veracity notwithstanding his manifest and acknowledged divergence from the

[6] St. John xx. 30.

[7] He was willing so far to accept the aid of the synoptical Gospels and not desirous to supplant them, as he must have been if his intention was to idealise their portrait of Christ, or to soften down the earthly features of it and to present substantially another Christ. The assumption is that he was not satisfied with the existing idea of Christ; but his own idea cannot be shown to differ materially from that which is expressed in the Pauline Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians. See Lecture vi. "His "Gospel was certainly intended to be supplementary to those "which went before; not to go over ground which they had suffi- "ciently gone over already; but to treasure up previous aspects of "the life of Christ, of His words and works, which they had "passed by."—Abp. Trench, "Studies in the Gospels," p. 2.

line adopted by others. He was not inwardly aware of any reason why he should not be believed, although it was true that there were other narratives very different from his already in existence.

Now, if a man wrote with the avowed expectation of being believed, in spite of the confessed unlikeness of his own narrative to those of others, it would not only be an additional evidence that his own narrative was trustworthy, but would also be just such an evidence as no one would readily think of presenting by design for the express purpose of seeming to be more trustworthy than he really was. In other words, in order to allege with any show of justice a want of truthfulness as underlying the great apparent simplicity of this writer, we must first assume in him a corresponding amount of the most accomplished duplicity. He was not merely chargeable with the imposition of endeavouring to pass for what he certainly was not, an eye-witness of the events recorded, but, more than this, he was master of the most consummate art in adjusting the garb he had assumed. It is impossible to acquit him of a degree of intentional deception in writing as he did, proportionate to the success which his adopted method would seem calculated to secure. And as to the degree of this success there can be no manner of doubt, because if the words now spoken of are not sincere they have every appearance of sincerity.

It seems, therefore, altogether not unreasonable to conclude that on the supposition of this Gospel being the production of the second century there are many considerations on internal grounds which make strongly against it. There is, in fact, *prima facie* internal evidence of its being of an earlier date. We proceed to trace out any further indications of this kind that we can discover.

Now it may be stated as a truth that unless there are strong reasons, either external or internal, to the contrary, we should never assume conjoint rather than single authorship in the case of any production which comes down to us ostensibly as the work of one man. To assume that an Epode of Horace, or a Treatise of Cicero, was the joint production of two or more writers would seem to be an unwarrantable exercise of criticism, except upon the very fullest evidence in confirmation of the theory. Neither should we willingly believe that the writings of Cæsar or Tacitus had been wantonly tampered with, whether by the way of addition or curtailment, except upon sufficient evidence to that effect. Why then should we be willing to believe otherwise with respect to the Gospel of St. John [8]? Before assuming then that a document, which has ostensibly come down to us in its in-

[8] Is it more likely, or unlikely, that the Gospel was left *finished* by its author without the 21st chapter, or without the last two verses of it? Can it be said to be *finished* without either? See Appendix, Note B.

tegrity, is to be divided and subdivided in order that every writer supposed to be concerned in it may have his share—before assuming that it has been added to or taken from, it would surely be the wiser course to accept it as it is, and to do what we can with it. Doubtless it were wiser to interrogate the oracle than to determine beforehand what its answer was to be. Why then assume beforehand, in the absence of external evidence for doing so, that the last chapter, or the last verses of the last chapter, must be dissevered from the rest? Would not the more natural course be, as we find them one, simply to examine their evidence on the supposition that they *are* one; and then, in the event of *that* failing, to adopt some other method? Is it not rather like a concealment of evidence to jump at once to the conclusion that another method is the first to be adopted? Is it not like silencing what witnesses there are in order that we may summon imaginary witnesses of our own? Let us rather forbear to do so till we have first collected the evidence which exists and endeavoured to arrive at an honest estimate of its value.

Now, it is quite certain that in the Gospel of St. John as it stands, there are three methods of narration adopted by the writer. The one which is most commonly followed is that of the third person. This is in fact, with three exceptions, the universal method. Once, however, in the first

chapter and twice in the last the use of the first person is adopted instead. When the writer says in the opening chapter "we beheld his glory," it is impossible[9] not to understand the words as a claim to having been an eye-witness of it, identical with that we have been considering in the case of our Lord's crucifixion. Nor is there any reason to believe that the two cases are not precisely identical. If, however, in the opening of his work the writer has once spoken in the first person, what need is there for surprise if we find him resorting to it in the close. In this case the phrase "we know that his testimony is true,[1]"

[9] As far as regards abstract impossibility the expression in the text requires modification, for some do propose to understand them otherwise; not, however, as it seems to me, with any show of probability. Cf. 1 John i. 1. Acts ii. 32, &c. Dr. Davidson says "the writer speaks from the standpoint of a general Christian in-" tuition," p. 438; but this cannot be so, because the words are thrown in parenthetically to enforce and supplement the assertion that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us;" "and we beheld His glory," &c.; the *us* is general; the *we* is limited, and must imply a personal testimony borne to the truth of the foregoing statement, otherwise it is without point or meaning. Unless, indeed, the *us* itself is limited in its significance, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among *us* who beheld his glory," &c. The phrases alleged "*as many as* received him," "of his fulness have *all we* received," do not here apply; in as much as they express a consciousness common to all Christians, the other a special experience of the writer, who claimed to be one of a limited class, the class of eye-witnesses.

[1] The question is whether "We know that his testimony is true" can be equivalent to "I know that what I say is true?" Now it is certain that there would be nothing remarkable in such an asseveration as this last. But if we suppose the first to be not

might at least be identical with that used before, "he knoweth that he saith true." This at least would be more consistent with the internal phenomena of the work than the gratuitous supposition that the last two verses of the last chapter were the addition of some other and unknown person or persons. Let us then assume, for the while, that our own position is correct so far.

When now we turn to the last verse of the last chapter we find another peculiarity, in the fact that whereas before, if the writer has departed from his accustomed use of the third person he has only changed it for the first person plural, he now for once and once only resorts to the first person singular. On the supposition then that the last chapter, or these verses of it, were the addition of the Church at Ephesus, or of any body of elders who would naturally speak in the first person plural, on what principle are we to account for their adoption suddenly of the first person singular instead. It cannot be fairly accounted for. We can understand any one person making use of the plural number, whether for dignity, modesty, or any other reason, and yet occasionally throwing off the thin disguise afforded by it, and

equivalent to it, there is surely something strange in a body of men attesting the credibility of an anonymous writer, especially when we have to postulate that body of men. Of two gratuitous assumptions, therefore, the first would seem to be the least gratuitous and the most natural.

taking up the singular instead; but we cannot see why persons speaking in their official or corporate capacity, and naturally using the plural number, should for no cause whatever resort suddenly, in such a case as this, to the use of the singular[2]. The instance of the Greek choruses, which sometimes use the singular and sometimes the plural number, is not to the point, for there the persons composing them could speak either in their individual or their collective capacity, according as the chorus was or was not merged in the individual, and as it wanted to express sentiments which were those of the individual; but in a case such as this there was nothing of the kind. In supposing that these verses are an addition of the Church giving the authority of its belief to what has gone before, then why should the expression of individual sentiment appear just where it does?—that is to say, not in a profession about the veracity of the

[2] It was not with the Evangelist as with Dante's Eagle composed of blissful souls in Paradise—the "milizia del ciel,"

Parea dinanzi a me con l'ale aperte
La bella image, che nel dolce frui
Liete faceva l'anime conserte.
Parea ciascuna rubinetto, in cui
Raggio di sole ardesse si acceso,
Che ne' miei occhi rifrangesse lui.
E quel che mi convien ritrar testeso,
Non portò voce mai, nè scrisse inchiostro
Nè fu per fantasia giammai compreso;
Ch'io vidi, ed anche udii parlar lo rostro,
E sonar nella voce ed *Io* e *Mio*,
Quand' era nel concetto *Noi* e *Nostro*.
*Paradiso* xix. 1-12.

work or the author, but in the far less important matter of the world's capacity for containing the books that should be written about Jesus? We conclude, therefore, that the οἶμαι of the last verse is precisely an instance of the writer's individual personality escaping, as it were half unconsciously, from the thin disguise of the first person plural, or the more successful one of the third person singular that he had before habitually assumed. In other words, it seems to be something more than probable that in this word οἶμαι, so delicately and yet so casually thrown in, we have the key to the authorship of this wondrous Gospel. He who wrote it, before concluding, does set his own seal of individual participation and responsibility to the work he is now bringing to a close. He no longer leaves us in doubt as to his own identity with the disciple whom Jesus loved, but lets us know that it was he himself.

In the contemplation, then, of the phenomena we have been considering, it seems fair to say that we must adopt one of two positions. Either we must allow that on the supposition of St. John's authorship of the Gospel, or that of any eye-witness, there is nothing at first sight in the internal evidence that militates against it, but, on the contrary, much that harmonises therewith; a delicate concealment of himself which is forgotten only once in the most spontaneous and undesigned manner, and which certainly would do the

highest credit to any writer :—or else, on the contrary supposition, we must admit that the person, professing to be an eye-witness, who wrote the Gospel, not only was possessed of the most consummate art—an art which is simply unparalleled in the whole cycle of supposititious literature—but also that he was chargeable with the most accomplished duplicity, because in proportion as those traces of possible authorship are the more delicate, exactly in that proportion it is impossible that they can have been occasioned without design. But the design in this case can have been nothing less than a deliberate intention to deceive—a deep-laid scheme of delusion.

Now, in order to establish an argument such as that we are now pursuing, there are two points which it is requisite to make out. First, That our own position is not untenable, nor improbably the true one ; secondly, That the position of our adversaries is neither tenable nor probable. And it must be borne in mind that, in considering the question before us critically, we are bound to leave out of it everything arising from the supernatural character of the events recorded. We must not suffer our judgment to be biassed one way or the other by their presence, but consider the merits of the case apart from them. Now, in asserting that the fourth Gospel was the production of the second century, we make a statement which may fairly challenge the question, What was the cha-

racter of the Christian literature towards the close of the second century, and are we acquainted with any one author who is capable of having written this Gospel? Can it not be proved that those who may be thought by some to be intellectually not incapable of writing it certainly did not do so? And are we not, after exhausting every name that occurs to us, driven to the assumption that the writer must have been otherwise entirely unknown? That is to say, we pass by one, or rather many eye-witnesses who may be presumed capable of writing it in order to invoke a writer who has confessedly no known existence but in our own imagination, and who can only on the most gratuitous assumption be supposed capable of writing it[3]. Is this a wise or a probable course to adopt? Surely a sufficient reply to this theory

[3] It may be said that the existence of the Gospel being a fact, we may suppose an author capable of writing it to have existed at one age as well as at another. But this argument cuts both ways. For, if he existed in the second, he may have existed in the first. There is absolutely no one to whom we can refer the fourth Gospel in the second century. *If* Jesus was the being that the Gospel sets Him forth, and the author was His beloved disciple, then this is the kind of work we might expect from him. It is wholly improbable that a writer living in the middle of the second century, and capable of writing this Gospel, should be otherwise totally unknown. It is absolutely incredible that a writer with moral and spiritual perceptions so sublime, living at that time, should have resorted to such means of at once instructing and imposing upon mankind. For he was not what he gave himself out as being. For he was not a genuine disciple of Jesus, the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount, still less an eye-witness of His life and death. St. Matt. v. 37.

may be found in the assertion, which may fearlessly challenge contradiction, that the Christian consciousness of the latter end of the second century, judged by its own existing monuments, and by them alone, was not adequate to the production of such a work as the fourth Gospel. We conclude, therefore, that it may have had a much earlier origin.

We must turn now to the consideration of another question. Supposing the writer to have been an eye-witness, how far is he a credible one? What internal indications are there of his credibility? Surely the divergence so often insisted upon between this Evangelist and the others has a very direct bearing upon this point. It is clear that the writer's aim must have been to give a sketch of the teaching of Jesus rather than a history of His life. Even the miracles recorded appear to hold a subordinate position to the teaching they are designed to illustrate. And even in recording the last hours of the life of Jesus, where the writer is precise and circumstantial, more attention and space are devoted to the discourses than to the sufferings of our Lord. It is fair to assume, therefore, that it was not his object merely to record the facts of the life of Christ, but much more to relate its moral, if we may so say. But is not this a proof, in addition to the one we have already mentioned, that other books were in existence then which supplied the circumstances here

omitted? And is not this writer's entire independence of the rest an argument quite as strong in favour of his veracity as the reverse? Nay more, for is it likely that he could maintain his ground in competition with others, from whom he differed so widely, if he were actually less trustworthy than they? The fact that this Gospel was generally known much later than the others is a negative indication of its genuineness, because, had it not been genuine, its struggle for acceptance, on becoming known, would have been incomparably more severe from the very circumstance of other and divergent narratives being already in possession of the field. So far, therefore, from the different character of the fourth Gospel being any cause for suspicion, it is rather an argument in its favour.

It is, then, by a natural inference that we advance one step further in the argument, and decide that, on the manifest evidence of this writer's minute acquaintance with those events that he describes,—such as the feeding of the five thousand, the healing of the impotent man, the raising of Lazarus, and the like, he is certainly not less trustworthy than any other Evangelist. We cannot but feel that, supposing him to have been an eye-witness, his information on these and similar points can be second to none. We may, of course, reject it, if we please; but if we do, we shall reject it arbitrarily, and without any sufficient show of reason. Judging by the same in-

ternal proofs by which we should judge any other species of writing, there is an absence of all indication that this writer, *if* an eye-witness, is not credible. We may say that the other Evangelists are not to be believed, but we cannot with justice say that this Evangelist, as far as regards his narrative of facts, is less to be believed than they. He is not romancing in the sense of giving a coloured and designed representation of the facts recorded. There is no valid proof of it.

But what are we to say with reference to the long discourses attributed in this Gospel to our Lord and others? Is it possible that these can represent, with any approximate accuracy, the language used, or even the thoughts expressed? More especially, when we bear in mind the long interval that, under any supposition, must have elapsed between their occurrence and the record of them? How can the last prayer of Jesus[4], which occupies the seventeenth chapter, possibly

[4] "The 17th chapter, containing the final prayer of Jesus, ex- "presses the sublimest and purest utterances of a spirit in inti- "mate union with God. The consciousness of the divine in the "man Jesus is reflected here in a very high form. The prayer "sets forth the glorification of the Son in consequence of the com- "pletion of his work, and an intercession with the Father for the "disciples that they may be kept in the faith. Nor is it limited "to the few followers then present. It is extended to all believers, "that they may be taken into union with the Father and Christ." Davidson ii. 336, 439. How, then, is it out of place in the mouth of Jesus? That it was conceived by *a man* is evident, why not by the highest, holiest man, even though he be not the Son of God?

be regarded as a real and not an imaginary prayer, when we know, on other authority, that our Lord had only three disciples with him in His agony, and that He returned to them three times and found them sleeping? It is not too much to say that, obvious as these questions are, the answers that may be given to them, if less obvious, are certainly both numerous and sufficient[5]. But it is enough for us now to ask whether there is any principle suggested by the writer himself upon which they may be fully explained; because, if so, then the existence of difficulties such as these becomes a mark of this writer's consistency with himself rather than the contrary. Now, we do find him distinctly saying that our Lord promised to endow His disciples with a faculty which, if not really supernatural, should so far assist their natural faculties as to bring all things that He had said unto them to their remembrance. Of course, it is possible that He may not have said anything of the kind, but *if He did*, and this is the point, then the difficulty vanishes at once, as far as it arises from His own discourses having been recorded. The writer is at least clear from the charge of any negligent and involuntary transgression of the limits of probability. He is not, on his own showing, guilty of a gross or inad-

[5] The true answer no doubt is, that this prayer was offered on the Mount of Olives before the agony took place in the garden of Gethsemane. See Mr. Pound's "Story of the Gospels," i. 559.

vertent violation of the laws imposed by them. And so far as he is not, we must either attribute to him again the dexterity of the most consummate art, or must allow that this fact, joined to his apparent artlessness, is an additional and an undesigned evidence of his truth. On the whole, then, we conclude that the internal evidence in the fourth Gospel is stronger in favour of the writer's credibility than the reverse.

One allegation, however, still remains which we must not omit to deal with. It is said that the design of the writer, in assuming the personality of a disciple and eye-witness, must be regarded as innocent, because, judged by the morality of those days, it would certainly have been thought so. No one living towards the close of the second century would have thought there was any harm in writing as though he had been a companion of our Lord, for the purpose of instructing mankind with the additional authority which that assumption would confer[6]. The end would be considered to justify the means. Now, here there are two points to be borne in mind. First, what should we ourselves think now of a parallel case? What

[6] The question is really one of fact. Is there any reason to believe that a person writing A.D. 150 would have pretended to be an eye-witness of our Lord's life, when it was obvious he could not have been? Is there sufficient reason to believe that the Christian public of that day would have been deceived by any such pretension, supposing it to be made? Is it any more likely that they would have received without suspicion a narrative then making its

is the verdict we find ourselves unconsciously passing on this particular case? Do we not call it a pious fraud? Is not the character or the memory of Chatterton to a certain extent sullied by the pertinacity with which he maintained that he had not written the poems of Rowley?[7] Is it not a fact that there is in the persistent adoption of an incognito somewhat of the nature of a falsehood, even as practically it must oftentimes involve an actual lie? And if *we* cannot help feeling this, why should we assume that others do not? Why should we place the standard of our morality higher than theirs? Why should we deny to others the possession of a moral sense equally fine and sensitive?

For, secondly, in order to do this in the present case, we must be willing to maintain that the general standard of morality in the fourth Gospel is not higher than our own. We must be prepared to assert that this writer, in spite of the marvellous insight into character and motive that he exhibits; in spite of the ruthless probing of conscience of which his Gospel is so full; in spite

appearance for the first time merely because it purported to be the authentic work of a disciple? What chance of success would a narrative meet with now professing to embody the genuine reminiscences of an actor in the struggle of 1745? Would it not first have to make good its claim? And must it not have been so then? Is there any evidence that it was not so?

[7] See, however, Dr. Daniel Wilson's very interesting Life of Chatterton. Macmillan, 1869.

of the unparalleled appreciation of truth everywhere conspicuous in it,—was nevertheless defective in the first principles of honesty, as it cannot fail to strike the mind of every ordinary reader, and as it does strike the minds of those who feel that it needs apology; that he being, as he manifestly was, on a platform which may be said to be even higher than that of other sacred writers, was all the while deficient in that instinctive perception of right and wrong which is the common property of all men of educated moral sense. Surely this is a position too monstrous to be maintained. And yet are we not virtually pledged to maintain it if we deliberately affirm that a writer, at the close of the second century, wrote a narrative of the life and teaching of our Lord, in which he pretended to be, and declared that he was an eye-witness of many of the facts recorded, and the bosom companion of his Master; when, from the simple fact of his adopting an anonymous style, he must have had the intentional design of imposing upon his own generation, and upon all the generations of posterity ?[8]

[8] Suppose a writer in the middle of the second century to have deliberately assumed the name of John, the son of Zebedee—Is it likely that his work would have been received as Apostolic? And how many degrees is it more likely that it would have been so received had he written, as it is assumed he did write, anonymously? And why was it that, writing as he did write, he should at once have been identified, contrary to all tradition, with a disciple whose name he studiously concealed, and whom he never even once mentioned, except by an unintelligible periphrasis?

We conclude, then, finally, that there are *a priori* reasons of sufficient strength to warrant us for the present [9] in regarding the writer of the fourth Gospel as a not otherwise than credible witness to Christ; and, in the absence of all evidence to the contrary, but in accordance with the voice of uniform tradition, to warrant us also in identifying him with the beloved Apostle John. It was he who "saw it," and "bare record," and "his record is true." It is he who "knoweth that he saith true," that *we* might believe.

[9] But see the fuller discussion of this question in Appendix, Note A.

# LECTURE II

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ST. JOHN'S TEACHING

St. John i. 1

"*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*"

THE position to which our argument has thus far brought us seems to be this. There is certainly not less *prima facie* evidence of an internal character for the fourth Gospel having been written by an Apostle and eye-witness than there is for its origin in the middle or end of the second century. Judging on purely internal grounds, and allowing to every indication of this kind its due weight, we may fairly say that first appearances are in favour of its Apostolic origin. And if such an origin is admitted at all we shall hardly prefer the claims of any other Apostle to those of St. John, its traditional author. If his authorship is called in question it is in consequence of other considerations than those which meet us on the surface of the work. Such considerations must receive their full share of atten-

tion elsewhere, but they need not detain us now.[1] At the present time we may proceed to inquire into the chief characteristics of this writer's teaching, on the supposition that he is St. John, though not by any means resting our argument on that supposition.

It is certain then that no one can fail to recognise the opening words of this Gospel as eminently characteristic of it. They form, as it were, the keynote or motto to the whole, if indeed they may not be regarded as almost peculiar to the fourth Gospel. That they are, however, not absolutely so may perhaps be shown conclusively; in the first Epistle of St. John we meet with the phrase[2] *The Word of Life*, and in the Revelation *The Word of God:* in both also with a usage more or less analogous to that of the phrase *in the beginning*, and with the emphatic assertion of the Sonship of Jesus. But whether or not common to other writings ascribed to St. John

[1] See Appendix, Note A.

[2] On the other hand Dr. Davidson says, "Christ is not termed "the *Logos* or *Word* absolutely, as he is in the gospel. He is *the* "*life*, *the eternal life* which was with the Father, *the Son of God;* "not *the Word*. High as the epithets are, they imply a conception "of his person inferior to the gospel's," ii. 297; and "The "Messiah is called *the Word of God* in the Apocalypse (xix. 13); "in the gospel he is *the Word* absolutely. The two phrases show "a different theological stand-point, the former savouring of "Palestinian, the latter of Alexandrian metaphysics. The one is "the well-known *Memra of Jehovah* so frequent in the Targums; "the other resembles Philo's idea," i. 334. Probably few will agree with him in either case.

they are clearly characteristic of the fourth Gospel. And yet this language, marked as it is, may find its parallel even in the Old Testament. Indeed it is hard to believe that the Evangelist, whoever he was, had not intentionally before his mind the opening verses of Genesis—"In the beginning God created . . . and God said." We cannot positively affirm this, but the similarity is at least a patent fact. However startling and original the conception or the language of the Gospel may seem to us, it is certain that there are continual traces of both to be found in the Old Testament. In the Pentateuch what more common than "the Lord spake unto Moses;" or in the prophets than "the word of the Lord came unto me saying"? It is perhaps impossible to prove the thoughts identical, but it is equally impossible to prove them not so, while an apparent correspondence does exist which cannot be denied.

It is customary, however, as we all know, to trace the origin of this writer's language to the works of Philo and the influence of Alexandrine thought. And the assumption that this origin is correct has doubtless contributed much to strengthen the theory of a non-Apostolic authorship for the Gospel.[3] Nor may we, on the other

[3] "The fourth Gospel, however, has an important advance upon "Philo's doctrine, when it announces the incarnation of the Logos "in Jesus. In this respect the author expresses an idea foreign to

hand, assume that there is so much unity among the books which the canon of Scripture has thrown together as to make the Biblical origin more probable, though it is certain that if that unity were admitted there could be no doubt at all as to its greater probability. All that we can assert is this—even allowing the influence of Philo to be traceable in St. John—it cannot be denied that the relationship is closer between his Gospel and the other books of Scripture than it is between those books and Philo. There is a generic bond in the one case which is altogether missing in the other. There is a specific relation between the synoptical Gospels and the prophets, for example, which is not found to exist between them and Philo. And no one can say that the fourth Gospel does not bear a nearer relation to the other three than it bears to Philo; therefore a nearer relation even to the prophets than does exist between them and

"the Alexandrian philosophy. Though the Logos is almost, if not "altogether hypostatised in Philo, his incarnation is alien to "that writer's conceptions. The Word, the Son of God, was mani- "fested personally in the flesh. Whence this element was derived, "we cannot tell. Did it exist before it was incorporated in the "gospel? Was it the result of philosophical reflection subsequent "to Philo? Did Hellenic culture excogitate it? Or did the writer "himself educe it from the depths of his consciousness? These "are questions we cannot answer, and therefore an important link "between Philonism and the Logos-theory of the fourth gospel is "missing," Davidson, ii. 341. This testimony is very valuable because true. The only question we need care to answer is, was the Evangelist right, or was he wrong? But this is a question which criticism necessarily waives as irrelevant.

Philo. It is not by accident alone that the works of Philo are excluded from the canon of Scripture. They are felt to be of a different kind. And great as the chasm is between the books of the Old Testament and those of the New, it is not by any means so great as that between both and Philo. One may affirm, indeed, that the charmed circle of canonicity is a spell which must be broken because it is unreal, but whether the spell is unreal or not the fact remains the same that a consanguinity, so to say, was recognised between writers very diverse in age and character, as, for example, Isaiah and St. John, which was not recognised between them and Philo, or between Philo and other writers even of the Alexandrine school.

It is exactly in proportion then to the degree of this consanguinity that we may seek for the prototype of St. John's thoughts and language in the Old Testament rather than in Philo. It is morally certain that the writer of the fourth Gospel must have been acquainted with the books of the Old Testament. It is by no means so certain that he must have been acquainted with the works of Philo or embued with Alexandrine thought.[4] Least of all is it needful that we should search in the schools of Alexandria for that which may

[4] "The general thinking of the age in which he lived was "moulded by Philo," Davidson, ii. 340. This at any rate is to prejudge his age.

certainly be found much nearer at hand in the Old Testament[5] when one *must* have been familiar to the writer and the other perchance *may* have been.

It seems to be very clear then that the fourth Gospel opens with the pre-existence of the Word, who, it afterward says, "was made flesh." Surely, therefore, on the strength of the relationship of which we have spoken and on that of the apparent likeness between the commencement of this book and the beginning of Genesis, we are not affirming too much if we say that the pre-existence here announced must be that of a person who has been known before, however strange his recent guise may be. He who becomes flesh is one who has been known of old—known, moreover, not as a modern speculation of the schools of Alexandria—a recent theory—but known throughout all the past and known in the beginning. He of whose human existence the manifestation is about to be recorded is the same Person who was recognised by prophets and lawgivers as speaking to them of old. His existence was merged, indeed, in that of the God with whom He was more or less identified,

[5] Philo himself seems to intimate that his doctrine of the Logos was taught by Moses. *Εἰ δέ τις ἐθελήσειε γυμνοτέροις χρήσασθαι τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, οὐδὲν ἂν ἕτερον εἴποι τὸν νοητὸν εἶναι κόσμον ἢ θεοῦ λόγον ἤδη κοσμοποιοῦντος· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ νοητὴ πόλις ἕτερόν τι ἐστὶν ἢ ὁ τοῦ ἀρχιτέκτονος λογισμὸς ἤδη τὴν αἰσθητὴν πόλιν τῇ νοητῇ κτίζειν διανοουμένου. Μωϋσέως ἐστὶ τόδε δόγμα τοῦτο, οὐκ ἐμόν.* De Mundi Opificio i. 6. This was pointed out to me by my friend the Rev. A. I. M'Caul.

but it was He who spoke, for He was the Word of God. Now, indeed, that appellation is more distinctly enunciated, and bestowed upon Him with more confident precision because of His manifestation in the flesh, for not until that manifestation had brought out into relief the distinction between the Father and the Son could any real distinction be clearly apprehended between God and the Word of God.

And as it is the pre-existence of the Word with which St. John opens his Gospel, so it is the pervading character of His existence upon which he constantly dwells throughout its course. Not content with showing who the Person who was made flesh had been in the past, he endeavours always to show the character of His existence in the present: that the incarnate One was the Light which lighteth every man; that He was cognisant of Nathanael's actions when under the fig tree; that He knew what was in man from spiritual contact therewith in every man, as no other man could know it; that in this, the truest and highest sense, He was verily the Son of Man, that is to say, a Son in whose being man merely as man had a share, to whom every man was joined by ties of consanguinity even as a father and a son are joined.

Thus he shows that this Son of Man even during His midnight conversation with Nicodemus was then in heaven, that He then had ascended

up to heaven because He had come down from heaven in the sense that no one else had ever come down; that He was the central light and truth from which all men had departed and were lost in their departure, but by which on their return to it they would be restored to light and truth and life—"should not perish but have everlasting life." Thus he shows that this Son of Man, while sitting on Jacob's well conversing with the woman of Samaria, has cognisance of all her history, speaks to her spirit and conscience in such a way as to tell her in a few brief but illuminating words all things that ever she did. Such is the character of the Word made flesh. His presence is subtle as the Divine presence, permeating and pervading all things. It is to be borne in mind that this is entirely independent of the accuracy or inaccuracy with which such characteristics are ascribed to Jesus; it is a matter of fact which admits of no dispute that by the writer of the fourth Gospel they are ascribed to Him.

The like characteristic is to be discerned in almost every incident the Evangelist relates of Jesus, and in all His discourses with the Jews. There is the same direct speaking to the conscience. The same searching with a bright light the secrets of the heart, which is more like a reflection of the thought slumbering within than the utterance of another's voice spoken from without. Take, for instance, "therefore did the

Jews persecute Jesus and sought to slay Him because He had done these things on the Sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."[6] There was no meaning in that answer, nor in the exasperation it awoke, if it was not spoken to something which in spite of itself could not but there recognise the Father. The hatred arose not from the mere annunciation of the Father whose name had been spoken of old, but from the assumption of a claim in Him which was not willingly admitted. The justice of this claim was felt in the conscience. It was no sooner advanced than recognised, because it was seen to be according to the truth of nature; but it was forthwith stifled and repressed. The previous considerations of hatred for the Person speaking were found to neutralise the truth with which He was felt to speak. But not the less had His speech the characteristics of the Word of God. Again, "I know you that ye have not the love of God in you,"[7] and "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father,"[8] are indications of the same power of scrutiny, of the same penetrating light, which the Son of Man in His character of the living Word of God bore with Him wherever He went. They were words spoken in anticipation rather than in reply. They read the thoughts more than they answered the sayings. And it is not possible to read the fourth Gospel and not to

[6] St. John v. 16, 17. [7] St. John v. 42. [8] St. John v. 45.

see that from one end to the other the writer's object is to draw out the identity of the Word made flesh with an invisible and ever-present Being who is the fountain of life and light and truth. It is not after all the pre-existence of the Word which is the keynote to his teaching, but the identity of the Word with a Being whose existence could not possibly be dated from the moment that the Word was made flesh, but whose existence in the present implied and involved His existence in the past.

It will be interesting to pursue the same inquiry further. In reply to the observation of the Jews, "When Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is;"[9] whether made openly or in secret does not appear—"Jesus cried in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me and ye know whence I am: I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not,"[1] speaking to the consciousness of those who felt—they knew not why—that the Man before them was in some inscrutable way the man within them; that they knew Him, therefore, and did not know Him. It was on account of this intensely searching language that they sought to slay Him, though in reply to His question, "Why go ye about to kill me," they had before asked, "Who goeth about to kill thee?"[2] For the same reason the officers of the chief priests and Pharisees who were sent to

[9] St. John vii. 27. [1] St. John vii. 28. [2] St. John vii. 19, 20.

apprehend Him were unable to do so, but were constrained to confess, "Never man spake like this man." Many had spoken like Him for eloquence, many had surpassed Him in the graces of rhetoric. The triumphs of the schools in these things were greater than the triumphs of Christ; but where no man ever spake like Him, was in the accuracy with which the spoken word agreed with the truth of the silent voice within.

It is needless to point out how this is exemplified in the narrative of the woman taken in adultery. We shall not stop to inquire into the genuineness of that passage; suffice it to say that the supposition of its being spurious[3] opens out a far greater difficulty in accounting for its origin than is occasioned by the mere fact of its omission in some of the oldest manuscripts and versions. But taking it as we find it now, how completely does it harmonise with the portrait uniformly given elsewhere of the Word made flesh. How does He assert His majesty by the discomfiture of the woman's accusers? How does He proclaim His Deity by that irresistible appeal to conscience before which the oldest and the youngest quail? There, if anywhere, is given the sentence of a

[3] The question whether or not it was actually written by St. John, or by the author of the rest of the Gospel, is of incomparably less moment than the question whether or not it is an authentic narrative of an actual incident in our Lord's life. On this latter point, I have myself no shadow of doubt, and scarcely less on the former one. But see Appendix, Note B.

Divine Judge, and given, as God's judgment is mostly given, in silence and submission. Truly, there, if anywhere, the voice without was the incarnation of the voice within. The Word made flesh was He whose silent utterance, in spite of themselves, was heard in the breast of those surprised and convicted sinners.

And is not this our Lord's own meaning when afterwards He asks the Jews, "Why do ye not understand my speech?" and Himself replies, "Even because ye cannot hear my *word*."[4] His outward discourse was unintelligible to them, because they were too obtuse to hear its counterpart within.[5] His speech they listened to; if so be they rejected it, His unspoken word they could not hear.

Take, again, the narrative of the healing of the man born blind. What a piteous spectacle of self-willed bigotry does the conduct of the Pharisees present! What a foil to the bright shining of the light of life in Christ is the wilful extinction of the light of truth in them! How does their deliberate resistance to evidence throw out into stronger contrast the purity of Jesus, till the two are confronted face to face in the question, "Are we blind also?" and in the reply, "If ye

[4] St. John viii. 43.

[5] And so "ye seek to kill me because my word hath no place in you," (viii. 37)—doth not gain ground, or work, in you; for as the innate sense of right and truth loses weight or influence in, so the principle of evil gains ascendency over, a man.

were blind, ye should have no sin, but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth." It is the conscience which is the field of the Word's energy. It is there that He operates and makes His power felt, and it is there we must seek for indications of that personal essence whose identity is proclaimed with the person of the Son of Man.

As the history proceeds, and the breach between Jesus and the Pharisees becomes greater, the traces of the presence of the Word as a living energy within the conscience of His enemies become fewer. The actual discussions cease, and there is naturally less occasion for observing the analogy between the spoken truth and the unconscious truth within. But one memorable instance is recorded in our Lord's interview with Pilate, in which it is brought out in all its startling vividness. We must examine the narrative in detail, and observe it closely.

A prisoner was brought to Pilate at the last Passover, whose fame had doubtless reached him, although perhaps he knew no more than vague report had spread abroad. He asks the people, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" and his curiosity is yet further stimulated by the evasive reply they give, "If he were not a malefactor, we could not have delivered him up unto thee." During his residence in Judea he had no doubt learned enough of the traditions of the people to attach a certain meaning to the phrase

which rumour had associated in some way with the prisoner, namely, "the King of the Jews." When, therefore, he entered into the judgment hall, he called Jesus and said unto Him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Now, the mere fact of his putting such a question showed that for some reason or other he felt a more than common interest about Jesus, and was desirous to hear His account of Himself. Notice, then, our Lord's reply. Jesus answered him, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" That is to say, Hast thou any personal interest in the question asked? or Is it the mere thoughtless echo of an idle rumour? Dost thou ask from mere curiosity, or from a deeper and more intimate concern? In other words, He traverses Pilate's consciousness; He forces him against his will to question his own motives, to pass some sort of judgment on the inward workings of his mind, as before an invisible judge. Pilate is touched, and resents the intrusion, which was too searching not to be felt, and too remarkable to be unobserved. He replies, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?" Here is the evidence that the prisoner has found him out. He at once stands upon his dignity, but he cannot do so without evading the point of which the prisoner had made him conscious. He virtually gives the lie to his wakening apprehensions, and

tries to stifle them. "How can it be as you suggest? I am not a Jew. I care nothing for them or their king. It is no concern of mine. You are my prisoner, and I demand what you have done." Our Lord pursues the same train of thought as before; He passes by Pilate's intended deviation, and answers, still speaking to Pilate's thoughts and not to his words, "My *kingdom* is not of this world: if my *kingdom* were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my *kingdom* not from hence."[6] That is to say, He thrice declares that He has a kingdom—that He is a king—but He takes care to point out the contrast between His kingdom and the only kingdom of which Pilate can form any idea. It is not a kingdom built upon war and bloodshed, violence and wrong, not a kingdom in which the servants fight—but a kingdom of a different pattern, a kingdom not of this world. Notice the sequel, "Pilate *therefore* said unto him, Art thou a king then?" He returns from the deviation in which he had sought refuge. His vague and unaccountable misgivings are confirmed. His prisoner's suspected royalty is established. Before he felt that He might be, now he feels that He is a king. Therefore Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king." The voice within thee says so; thine own confession ratifies it. My dominion is the

[6] St. John xviii. 36.

dominion of the truth, for "to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." That is to say, The voice which has been holding converse with thee—which has been speaking to thee—which thou hast heard and recognised—is none other than the voice of truth—the voice of that which *is*. It lies deeper than all falsehood; but when once aroused, it cannot be stifled. *It is my voice.* The mention, however, of anything so real as truth, is enough for Pilate. He has on principle ceased to believe in truth. So he turns away with a sneer, "What is truth?" He cares no more for Jesus or His kingdom when he finds it is nothing more than the kingdom of the truth; and yet he must yield a partial homage even to the truth, for he has heard its voice and felt its power. He goes out again unto the Jews and saith unto them, "I find in Him no fault at all; . . . . will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?"[7]

We see, then, in this episode, how the Word made flesh identifies Himself with the voice of truth in the conscience, which, whether it can be recognised or not, has its existence there. The Son of Man is the incarnation of the ever-present voice of truth—of the light which lighteth every man, which is the witness to God and to truth in

[7] St. John xviii. 39.

every man—which may be imprisoned, bound, put to death, and stifled, but which sooner or later will assert and vindicate itself—which may be crucified, but will assuredly rise again from the dead, ascend into heaven, and rule on the right hand of God.

The irresistible power of this voice of truth is shown in Pilate's subsequent conduct. He had not the courage to obey the truth, to trust its guidance, and surrender himself to its sway; but neither had he the power to set it at defiance, to ignore or to forget it. Twice he persisted, in opposition to the people, that he found no fault in Jesus, though he could submit to stand by and see Him scourged, crowned with thorns, and clad in purple; till at last the cry, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God," raises Pilate's suspicions to the highest point of awe and terror. He is more than ever convinced of the mysterious character of the prisoner he has to deal with. He must question Him once more. He went again into the judgment hall and saith unto Jesus, "Whence art thou?" What a strange question! Why ask Him, "Whence art thou?" Why should His origin all at once become the matter of inquiry? Was He not like other men? Were those words, "My kingdom is not of this world," still ringing in Pilate's ears? Did he feel there was a truth in them? Was the prisoner's origin,

after all, not of this world? Was it from that undiscovered world of truth in whose existence Pilate tried to persuade himself that he did not believe?

The fact of this question being asked showed that Pilate was not unconscious of an inward struggle, which arose from something more than uneasiness on account of the prisoner's innocence —for a man of Pilate's character, who had mingled the blood of innocent and helpless Galilæans with their sacrifices would not commonly be so anxious about the execution of strict justice on offenders only as this would imply—but his uneasiness arose rather from a growing consciousness, which the prisoner had been the first to work in him, that there existed a truth and justice to which he was himself responsible, while, for some reason he could not explain, he felt that Jesus was mysteriously identified therewith. He had found that the voice of the prisoner had awoke responsive echoes in his conscience to which before he had been a stranger, and for which he could not account. And hence the question, "Whence art thou?"

It is then a further characteristic of the nature of the Word which is discovered to us when we read that to this question Jesus vouchsafed to give him no answer. He had heard the Voice—he had confessed to having heard it. He was therefore no longer independent of its authority. He

could not escape from the obligations under which it laid him. On the contrary, he was bound to yield to it, so far as he felt it had spoken. But instead of doing this, he was resisting it. He had done it the greatest possible indignity by giving a denial to its existence. He had asked unbelievingly, "What is truth?" Now, it was time for the Voice of Truth to vindicate itself by the dignity of silence. God speaks once and twice, but He does not speak again when the lie is given to the voice which has once been recognised. God is too high and holy to be careful to maintain His existence, when, in spite of the witness of the conscience, that existence is denied. It is so with truth. She rests on a foundation too secure for her to be anxious to defend herself against every wanton or violent assault. She is confident of the strength of her foundations though the storm may rage, and the wind and the rain may fall and blow and beat pitilessly upon her house. But none the less would the grandeur and the majesty of the Word be compromised if He were eager to assert Himself. He had now wrested from Pilate against his will a recognition of His voice, and on that recognition He could stand. He would not make the fact of his existence to depend, or to be contingent on a categorical reply to the random and unbelieving interrogation of a presumptuous and impertinent querist. And therefore it was, when Pilate asked Him,

"Whence art thou?" that "Jesus gave him no answer."[8] The conduct of the Word made flesh was the direct counterpart of the habitual conduct of the unincarnate Word in His dealings with the conscience which is awakened to His demands, but a rebel to His authority,—not ignorant of His claims, but wilfully sceptical and obtrusively curious as to their source.

Once again, however, upon Pilate's telling his prisoner of the power he had to crucify or to release Him, Jesus speaks, but it is with a voice that in the same manner indicates the origin after which Pilate had inquired, not indeed directly, but in the sphere of conscience. "Thou couldest have no power at all against me," He says, "except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." Now, there were two thoughts here which can hardly have been very familiar to Pilate, and yet Jesus confronts Pilate with them. One was the thought of a power higher than his own, but not of this world—a Power above him from whom he had himself received power; and the other was the thought of sin. Jesus deals with these as primary thoughts in the uneducated conscience of Pilate. He did not assume that he was ignorant of either. He spoke to that in him which recognised both. And again Pilate confessed his perception of the light shining within him, for we are told from

[8] St. John xix. 9.

thenceforth he sought to release Jesus. The bitter irony of his subsequent question, "Shall I crucify your king?" only showed too plainly how deep the words of Jesus had entered into him; how severe was the struggle that was going on within between the demands of his self-interest and the mysterious convictions that had been aroused of the supremacy of truth, of the sin of resisting it, and of the unknown relation between the voice of truth heard in the conscience and the calm dignity of the prisoner before him.

Now the instances we have been considering are sufficient to show the characteristic manner in which the fourth Evangelist represents Jesus as the incarnation of the Word. It is, to say the least, an assumption to suppose that the writer of this Gospel, whoever he was, had in his mind certain modes of Alexandrine thought which he worked up in his own way and for his own purpose. It is, to say the least, not more, but, on the contrary, rather less of an assumption to suppose that the meaning of his work was contained in the work itself. If there is little or no evidence that he was himself acquainted with these modes of thought, there certainly is still less evidence that he pre-supposed any such acquaintance on the part of his readers. *And yet we must make this latter assumption as well as the former one* before we can fairly suppose that the writer's meaning can only be discovered by looking for the key to

it in such modes of thought. We would much more strongly insist that the Gospel itself supplies the key, if not to the phraseology employed, at least to the manner in which it is used. We would confidently maintain that sundry illustrations of this manner are presented by the Gospel itself, specimens of which the instances that have been adduced exhibit.

Whether, however, this be so or not, certain it is that a Power such as we have endeavoured to describe has its existence in the world. We have only to examine the spiritual nature of man and to search our own consciences in order to discover rays of a light correspondent to that of which the fourth Gospel speaks. It is a fact that there is a light which lighteth every man. The universal conscience of man is the organ which discerns that light. That there are those who discern it not is no proof of its non-existence any more than the fact that some men are born blind is a proof that the sun is non-existent, or than the fact that, for many days in winter, it is invisible to us, is a proof that it is visible nowhere else. To man, as he exists generally all the world over, there is a consciousness of such a light. And what is more, even in those cases where naturally or from accident the perception of this light is feeble, as for instance it was with Pilate, there also it has only to shine in order gradually to effect a recognition. The shining of the light produces a witness to itself in the region

where it shines. Pilate, though naturally and from the accidents of his position blind to truth and unaffected by the consciousness of sin, was nevertheless constrained to acknowledge the existence of both in the presence and the light of the Word made flesh.

Again, whether or not we may predicate an intention on the part of this Evangelist to exhibit such effects as those referred to, certain at least it is that they are to be perceived. His Gospel, whether from design or not, does most marvellously illustrate the keen, subtle, penetrating, scrutinising power of a light which judges and detects the thoughts and intentions of the heart. It is absolutely impossible to deny this, whenever the Gospel may have been written and whoever may have been its author. But when we find him starting with the assertion that Jesus was the true light which lighteth every man, that John was not that light but came to bear witness of that light, it becomes hardly less impossible to deny that the writer's professed intention was to exhibit Jesus as the incarnation of this light, and to show how He proved Himself to be so by the circumstances and the conduct and the teaching of His natural life. Now these are points which it is not only difficult to deny but which also it must be remembered are altogether and entirely independent of any questions we may choose to raise upon the date

or authorship, the authority or credibility of his work.

Let us then gather up the threads of the argument which we have in our hands. There is a treatise recording the discourses and incidents from the life of Jesus, which dates not later than the commencement of the second half of the second century after Christ. It purports to be written, however, by one who was himself an eye-witness and an intimate companion of Jesus, and there are certain internal considerations which are not inconsistent with the supposition of his being so, in which case we must of course assign to it an earlier date. This, however, we leave for the present as an open point, content with the earliest date for which our opponents have declared, that namely of A.D. 150. It must be borne in mind, however, that we attribute no particular authority to this document such as would tend to neutralise our previous concessions. We take it only for a witness to an unknown writer's view of Jesus and the character of Jesus, at the time he wrote. More than this it is not possible to ask of us. But we have a right to inquire what was the nature of his view? What was the character or bearing of his thoughts? And to this his own work must furnish the only and a sufficient answer. From the study of that work it appears that he believed Jesus to be not a mere man like other men or even like John, who, on the testimony of Jesus

elsewhere preserved, was the greatest of the prophets, but the embodiment or incarnation of a light which was in all men—that Jesus was the human impersonation of that principle of truth which does in fact constitute the very foundation of our personal existence—which found its witness in Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria and the man born blind, as well as in Pilate and Judas and the other enemies of Jesus, the Jews and Pharisees. He believed and wished others to believe that in this sense Jesus was the Word of God made flesh, that He not merely had an existence in the beginning of things before the world was, but that He, so to say, was in existence in the consciences of men during the time that He was manifest in the flesh—that this existence of His was a permanent existence quite independent of His existence as a man among men, but to which His existence as a man among men accurately corresponded, and of which it was manifested once for all as a witness never to be forgotten. He believed that there lay dormant in the conscience of every man that which was capable of reflecting the light which Jesus was, unless the rays of it were intercepted by darkness or blindness, or prejudice, just as in every drop of water on the earth's surface there is a capacity for reflecting the image of the sun if only the beams of it are permitted to fall appropriately. He believed in the existence of such a spiritual light as

this, and he believed that Jesus was that light. We are warranted in saying so much on the evidence of his own language. For the moment it matters not from what source he borrowed his knowledge of this light or the phraseology he employed to express it. Certain it is that if he borrowed them from the schools of Alexandria he did not borrow from those schools the no less striking feature of his doctrine, namely the identification of Jesus with this light. For the schools of Alexandria were not Christian if he was an Alexandrine Christian.

Under all circumstances, therefore, there still remains this feature of his doctrine to be explained. He believed that by searching deep enough into the spiritual nature or "the life" of men, you could arrive at that germ or essence which became man in the person of Jesus. He believed that the universal witness to the person of Jesus was at the bottom of the personality of every man. The first primal element of our common nature as men was that which became man in Jesus, for He was the incarnation of the God which is in every man. This, of course, pre-supposes that God is the root or ἀρχὴ of our being; but does the teaching of the fourth Gospel assume that we have any other ἀρχὴ than God? Does it not, on the contrary, assert that the Word was God? That in the Word by whom all things were made was that life which was the light of

men, and that the light of men was He who robed Himself with flesh in the person of Jesus.

It will, perhaps, hardly be maintained that we have misrepresented our writer in endeavouring thus to exhibit the substance of his teaching. There is, and can be, no question that he did identify Jesus with the Word. There scarcely can be more, upon consideration and study of the Gospel itself, that he was not less anxious to make his readers understand who the Person he wrote of was in the Present than that He had existed in the Past. In fact, the one depended on the other. If Jesus was really apprehended as the truth which was at the bottom of all existence—the life which really underlay all the manifestations of life, the I AM, Who is the Cause, the Stay, the Hope, the Object, and the End of all creation—then it follows as a necessary consequence that there can be neither Beginning nor End of His existence. He must be from ages of ages unto ages of ages, even from all eternity unto all eternity. For His is the only self-existent life, and the world, and all things that are therein, are but the breath of His mouth, and as the shadow of the style upon the dial-plate compared with the sun that casts it.

If, then, we are right in saying that the object of the fourth Evangelist was to reveal and lay bare the Word as He exists in the inviolate and unbiassed conscience of every truthful man, and to

assert the identity of the personal existence of that Word with the man Jesus,—if he taught that there was a light in every man of which Jesus was the manifestation in human flesh,—and this cannot be denied, even if it be denied that the instances we have given were proposed as examples of its existence and operation—then it is important to observe what follows on the assumption which we are provisionally prepared to admit of the late origin of this Gospel. For then, in that case, it follows, first, that no writer living 150 years after Christ could possibly have advanced such a theory as the one here propounded, if Jesus had been a mythical or imaginary personage who had no real existence. For, on the assumption the tone of this writer's mind was of a mystical and abstract character, he took delight in thought as thought, in ideas of a purely metaphysical nature. But it certainly cannot be denied that the Jesus whom he portrayed was to his imagination a real existence. He was concerned with the actions and discourses of a living person—a person who had lived. He was not setting before his readers the history of one whom he intended them to accept as a shadow. The Jesus of his narrative was a real Jesus to him, and was meant to be a real Jesus to others. This, then, being so, why was it that he, as a dealer in abstractions, should not rather have taken the abstraction which he found ready to his hand, and been content with it?

Why attempt to give a real existence to that which, on the hypothesis, had none, and which, according to the assumed tendency of his own mind, wanted none? Why should he of all men assay to give "a local habitation and a name" to that which one would think he might rather have preferred to contemplate as an "airy nothing," a "form" of "things unknown" to actual life? The very shape his work assumed was a witness that the Life which he recorded was not an invention of his own, but had been lived in the flesh. For, if otherwise, why should he who delighted in abstractions have laboured to give consistency and form to that which was before impalpable?

Again, we must bear in mind that on the present hypothesis the fourth Gospel came into existence about a century and a quarter after the death of Christ; that is to say, in a space of time rather longer than three generations or rather less than four, and equal as near as may be to that period of time which has now elapsed since the events of 1745. We ourselves, therefore, can well estimate the probability at this distance of time of the known Scottish devotion to the house of Stuart creating the historic picture of the Prince Charles Edward. Many traditions survive at this moment in the Highlands of Scotland of the romance of that fruitless struggle. But is it possible that these can have congealed now into the familiar form and features of the young

Chevalier? Would it be possible for any man now to write a Life of that unfortunate Prince which should circulate in the Highlands of Scotland and be generally accepted as historic if he had never lived? And yet this is an exact parallel to the case in point. It is assumed that the devotion of the Christians to an idea created the portrait of the human Christ. As well might the devotion of the Highland clans to the house of Stuart at this distance of time create the familiar portrait of the young Pretender. Romantic as his name has not ceased to be, it is nevertheless a romance which is gathered round something more than a mere nucleus of truth. His memory is as fresh at this hour in the minds of the Scottish nation as if he had died but yesterday. But this would not have been so had he been an unreality. The existence, therefore, of the fourth Gospel, if its origin was so late as A.D. 150, is at all events, even though it be a romance, a witness to the existence of an historic Christ. We have heard of those who have mistaken memories for hopes,[9] but it is only in the dreams and visions of the night that hopes are converted into memories.

Lastly, it is not possible, on the same hypothesis as before, to account for the teaching of the fourth Gospel if we assume it also to contain a false or unauthorised development of Christian

[9] Madame de Stael, Corinne. iv. 3.

doctrine. For in that case it would not have been commonly received as genuine by the Christian body at the end of the second century. Supposing it to have started into existence so late as A.D. 150, why was it generally received at A.D. 200? Could it have been recognised as the best interpretation of Christianity when Christianity as a name had possibly no existence, and when certainly it was not felt to need any interpretation? when the faith of Christians had much of the unconsciousness of infancy and had not begun to contemplate itself? If it be true that "This "great unknown, in departing from apostolic tra- "dition, teaches us to rise above it,"[1] how is it that his Gospel was accepted by an age which if anything was only too jealous of so-called Apostolic tradition? This is a question which beyond all doubt may more fairly be asked than it can readily be answered. Bear in mind that we are not speaking now of authorship, but of the extreme improbability of such a work as this being commonly accepted by the Christian body, if its view of the teaching and character of Christ were altogether as recent, and, so to say, tentative as it is alleged to be. It is doubtless a remarkable and significant fact that the fourth Gospel should have been received in Christian Churches, appealed to as authoritative by Christian Fathers, and assailed by the adversaries of the Christian faith, as early

[1] Davidson, ii. 449.

as the close of the second century,[2] if its own conception of the person and character of Christ as the Word which was in the beginning with God and was God, had been borrowed from the schools of Alexandria but fifty years before, and was not the native and spontaneous outgrowth of the Church's virgin soil, identical in form and substance with the tradition she had received from the first known disciples and accredited preachers of the word.

[2] Dr. Davidson says, "Theophilus of Antioch (about A.D. 176) is "the first who expressly ascribes the gospel to John. . . . The "Muratorian fragment recognises the apostolic origin of the "gospel. . . . From this time forward the gospel is generally "referred to as the work of the apostle John. Irenæus (A.D. "190), Clement (200), and Tertullian (200), unmistakably use it as "his. The fathers generally are agreed on the point at the end of "the second century; and the voices that object to its Johannine "origin are few. The current belief at the beginning of the third "century was, that the apostle wrote it."—ii. 402.

# LECTURE III

## THE ESSENTIALS OF ST. JOHN'S TEACHING

St. John x. 30.

*"I and my Father are one."*

IT is a truth which cannot be too often or too earnestly impressed upon men's minds at the present time that Christianity has no interest whatever in maintaining the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel if it was not written by St. John.

The supposed advantage of having in our possession a genuine work of our Lord's own Apostle would be entirely neutralised if the work were not genuine. The traditional St. John is dear, but truth is dearer, and nothing would be gained by mistaking the fictitious for the real; on the contrary, great would be the gain if, being mistaken, we could be convicted of our mistake.

If, therefore, there is really, as a matter of fact, sufficient evidence to show that this Gospel was not written by St. John, we should not only be prepared, but thankful to have our minds purged

of all regard for the adventitious worth that attaches to it from the supposed Johannine authorship. So much we may readily admit; but then there arises a further question, whether the non-Johannine authorship being proved, the Gospel ceases to have any real value at all. We have, I think, a right to insist upon the distinct and entire independence of the abstract and absolute value of the Gospel as a theological work, and its relative and conditional value as the production of St. John. Certain it is that whoever wrote it, and whenever it was written, its artistic and literary beauty remains the same; nay, more, its merit as a work of art is more open to the commendations of criticism in proportion as the art of it is the direct result of conscious design—the intentional effect of educated skill. But as with its beauty, so also with its truth. So far as the ideal it expresses is a true one, so far it should be acknowledged as true. If this Gospel happens to be the embodiment of great spiritual truths, then unquestionably those truths have a claim on our acceptance for their own sake, and on their own merit, quite independently of the writer who may have uttered them. It is perfectly obvious that this writer cannot have intended to commend these truths to our acceptance on his own personal authority or on that of the Apostle John, because in that case he would have been careful to identify himself more unmistakeably with the son of

Zebedee, or have told us more explicitly who he was. It was plainly part of his method to cast his truth upon the world, and to leave it to take care of, and to vindicate itself. It is the mere creation of our own fancies—for which there is not the slightest foundation—to suppose that he desired to pass for the Apostle John, and *on that ground*, to command a favourable hearing for his opinions. Had this been so, he should, at all events, for his own sake as well as ours, have made his identity more plain; nay, he surely would have done so.

We see, then, that supposing the view of Christ which the Gospel embodies to be correct, there is a certain amount of unfairness in using the non-Johannine authorship of the book as an argument against such correctness. If that view be true absolutely, it is certainly not less true because St. John did not write the Gospel. We are not at the present moment assuming its truth, but we say that, *if true*, the question of authorship does not affect the truth. It is possible to assail the truth on other and independent grounds, but it most assuredly does not stand or fall upon the question, Who wrote the Gospel?

Now, let us inquire, What are really the essentials of that teaching which is presented by the fourth Evangelist, admitting, for the sake of argument, the same hypothesis as before, that he wrote about the middle of the second century,

many years, therefore, after St. John's death? This is, happily, a question that is further removed from the region of debate than the one of authorship; for, whatever our notions on this latter point, no one has any doubt as to the tendency of the Johannine teaching. The author of the fourth Gospel has written with the point of a diamond in the clearest, the most lucid, the most incisive manner, so as to leave no shadow of ambiguity on the reader's mind as to what his meaning and opinion were. The purpose of the writer not only transpires oftentimes incidentally, but is declared explicitly when he says, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." It is one of the rash and baseless assertions brought against the synoptical Gospels[1] that, according to their account, our Lord did not commence His ministry in the character of the Messiah, but that the conception was one which grew upon Him by degrees, Simon Peter being the first to originate and apparently to suggest it to his Master. On the other hand, it is alleged with truth that in the fourth Gospel Jesus appears as the Messiah from the very commencement. We can hardly imagine that the common sense of Englishmen will readily accept this as an instance of disagreement in the Evangelistic narratives.

But with respect to the fourth Gospel, the

[1] Albert Réville, Revue des Deux Mondes, vol. lxiii., p. 93.

position is clear. In the very first chapter Philip confesses Jesus as the Christ of prophecy, and intimates to Nathanael that he has found Him. Immediately afterwards, upon adequate proof, Nathanael himself acknowledges Him with the spontaneous and magnificent confession, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art *the King of Israel*.[2] At the first miracle of Jesus in Cana of Galilee it is said that He "manifested forth his glory," that is, His glory as Messiah, and His disciples believed on Him.[3] At the first passover He gave a practical illustration of His royal power in His Father's house by the summary and successful manner in which He purged the temple of the money-changers. His first discourse with Nicodemus was occupied with the conditions of entrance into the kingdom of God, as though it rested with Him, as the King, to make them. In His second discourse with the woman of Samaria, He expressly announces Himself as the Messiah which was to come. The Samaritans themselves confess that He is "indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."[4] The same confession appears to be implied of the Capernaum nobleman, for it is said that "himself believed and his whole house."[5] In the fifth chapter, when discoursing with the Jews, He says Himself that Moses wrote of Him, which is a direct claim to be the subject of prophecy.

[2] St. John i. 49.
[3] St. John ii. 11.
[4] St. John iv. 42.
[5] St. John iv. 53.

In the sixth chapter, the multitudes who are fed declare their conviction, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world,"[6] and on that ground proceed to organise an abortive effort to make Him their "king." At the close of the same chapter Simon Peter makes virtually the same confession that he is reported to have made by the other Evangelists, which, after the allegation we have mentioned, it may be to us a matter of surprise to encounter here, "We believe and are sure that thou art *that Christ* the Son of the living God."[7] In the seventh chapter we find the question asked at Jerusalem, not without much debate, "Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very *Christ?*" while shortly afterwards, under the pressure of still graver doubt, many of the people said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet," and "Others said, This is the Christ."[8] In the ninth chapter, the enmity against Him had proceeded to such a height that "the Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."[9] In the tenth chapter, we read that as He "walked in the temple in Solomon's porch," at "the feast of the dedication, the Jews came round about him and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."[1] At the grave of

[6] St. John vi. 14. [7] St. John vi. 69. [8] St. John vii. 26, 40, 41.
[9] St. John ix. 22. [1] St. John x. 24.

Lazarus we find Martha, in reply to the Lord's interrogation, saying, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."[2] The twelfth chapter records the royal progress of Jesus to the Holy City, when "much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna! blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."[3] Shortly afterwards the question is asked Him, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever, and how sayest thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? who is this Son of Man?"[4] In our Lord's last prayer we find Him using words which, strange to say, have been perverted so as to wing the arrow of assault against its genuineness, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."[5] His assertion of His kingly power in the presence of Pilate we have already at large considered. It is not the slightest indication of the effect produced on Pilate by that won-

[2] St. John xi. 27. [3] St. John xii. 13. [4] St. John xii. 34.

[5] St. John xvii. 3. "The words '*Jesus Christ* whom thou hast "sent,' are unsuitable in the lips of Jesus himself. The proper "name *Jesus Christ*, is foreign to his time, and even to the early "apostolic era. It appears for the first time in Paul (Rom. i. 1)" —Davidson, ii. 351. But it is found in 2 Thess. i. 1, which according to him is six years earlier. Cf. St. Matt. xxvi. 68; St. Luke xxiii. 2; St. John ix. 22; Acts ii. 36.

drous interview that he brought Jesus forth saying, "Behold your King; . . . . Shall I crucify your King?"—that the title which he wrote to put upon the cross ran, "Jesus of Nazareth, the *King* of the Jews;"[6] and that when "the chief priests of the Jews" said to Pilate, "Write not the King of the Jews, but that he said I am the King of the Jews," Pilate was inflexible, and "answered, What I have written I have written."[7]

Now, from this amount of evidence, it appears that there cannot be the slightest doubt that it was the intention of the fourth Evangelist to represent Jesus as the Christ. The Messiahship of Jesus was one of the essentials of his teaching. It is not possible to arrive at any other conclusion. As far as his own belief went, (and this is the only point at present), he was fully convinced that Jesus was the Christ.

Let us see, then, what that implies. It implies that he believed Jesus to have been at once the subject and the object of prophecy. It implies that he was enough of a *Jew*[8] to believe that the Old Testament Scriptures centred round the Person of One who was to come. That there was in those Scriptures an element of expectation which required to be satisfied—an element of promise

[6] St. John xix. 19. [7] St. John xix. 22.

[8] His anti-Judaic prejudices, and his foreign relation to Judaism and the Jewish nation, are frequently alleged—*e.g.*, Davidson, ii. 433.

which waited to be fulfilled. It implies that, in his opinion, apart altogether from the interpretation and application of individual passages, the Scriptures, as a *whole*, warranted the belief that a Person would arise as a deliverer who should realise to the full Israel's highest instinctive hopes of glory. It implied that, whether or not he was a disciple of Philo, he was at all events thus far a disciple of Moses and the Prophets.[9] For this was a belief that was not inculcated in the schools of Alexandria, but was mainly, if not exclusively, to be learned from the Hebrew Scriptures. We have, therefore, conclusive evidence that, whether or not the writer was a Platonist or a Philonist, he was at any rate a *Jew*.

[9] Were it not for certain chronological considerations that it is impossible to set aside, it would be almost as reasonable to seek for the origin of much of St. John's language, and many of his thoughts in the "Bhagavad-Gita," as in Philo. Those who are acquainted with Sanskrit poetry cannot fail to have been struck with the marvellous resemblance, in parts of that episode, both to the fourth Gospel and to the Revelation, as they must also have been at a loss to account for it, *e.g.* :—

aham sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvam pravartate, (B.G. x. 8.)
Ego Universi fons, ex me Universum procedit. (Cf. St. John i. 3.)
aksharaṇamakaro 'smi dwandwaḥ samasikasyacha
ahamevakshayaḥ kalo dhataham viswatomukhaḥ
mṛityuḥ sarvaharaschahamudbhavascha bhavishyatam.
kirttiḥ srirvakcha (B.G. x. 33, 34.)

Inter elementa sum littera *A*, atque copulatio inter verba composita. Ego sum tempus æternum, altor ego omnituens, et mors cuncta rapiens ego, et ortus futurorum. Fama, Fortuna, atque Vox.—(Cf. Rev. i. 8 ; St. John i. 1, &c.)

The "Bhagavad-Gita" is probably not much older than the second century of our era. The theology of it is Theistic.

But there was another element no less conspicuous in his teaching and essential to its integrity, which we proceed now to develop. If it is a fact that according to this writer Jesus was the incarnation of the Word and was identified personally with the Word, it is likewise a fact that according to him the Word was God. He was in the beginning with, by, at, or close to God. All things came into existence, or became, by Him, and nothing that was made was made or became without Him. So that He was the direct and necessary personal instrument of creation, if not ultimately or absolutely the Creator.[1] He was, moreover, the Being who had dealt of old with His people by the promises to the patriarchs and the redemption out of Egypt, and the revelations to the prophets, and the long series of mercies and of marvels which had been shown for upwards of a thousand years to the chosen race, for "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." The glory which He manifested was "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," and He who manifested it was "full of

[1] C'est par son action que "tout est *devenu*." Qu'on veuille bien noter cette expression ; le quatrième évangéliste est trop philonien pour dire que le monde a été *créé*, au sens absolu, par le Verbe.—Albert Réville, Revue des Deux Mondes, vol. lxiii. p. 107. It is to be observed, however, that Christ was the *author* of creation exactly in the same sense that He was the *author* of the grace and truth which are characteristics of His redemptive work. St. John i. 17.

grace and truth." His fulness was the source of all grace in men, and in this respect He was worthy of more honour and was higher than Moses, for whereas the Law (which is an instrument of condemnation) was given by Moses it was grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. Though it is true that no man hath seen God at any time, yet the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, with whom Jesus is identified, hath declared, led the way to, pointed out, expounded or interpreted Him.[2] It was He who had the power, as an innate or inherent faculty, of baptising with the Holy Ghost.[3] On being assured of this John himself bare record of Him "that this is the Son of God."[4]

One of His earliest disciples, Nathanael, as we have seen already, confessed Him as "the Son of God;"[5] and He Himself gave a tacit assent to that recognition in His reply, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man,"[6] for the significance of that familiar title is destroyed if it implies no more than it literally expresses. Thus we find Jesus Himself affirming to Nicodemus that the natural habitation and the uniform abode of the Son of Man is "in heaven."[7] While at the same time He shrinks not from thrice appropriating the alternative appellation "Son of God,"

[2] St. John i. 18. [3] St. John i. 33. [4] St. John i. 34.
[5] St. John i. 49. [6] St. John i. 51. [7] St. John iii. 13.

and twice enhancing its manifest significance by the adjunct of the incommunicable epithet Only-Begotten.[8] The Baptist confesses that he himself is but the friend of the Bridegroom who must ever increase as he decreases, but that the Bridegroom "cometh from above," and "is above all" for that He alone who "cometh from heaven is above all;" that He is "sent" of God and "speaketh the words of God," because He receiveth not the Spirit by measure, as a man; that "the Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand," and that only by believing "on the Son" any man hath or can have "everlasting life."[9]

We pass now to another aspect of the like teaching which may be called, not the direct but the inferential aspect, which comes out in our Lord's discourses with the Jews, and which serves to show by implication the real bearing of this cardinal expression "Son of God." We shall now see that Jesus habitually speaks in a capacity which cannot be realised, and in which the meaning altogether collapses, except upon the understanding that it was intended to be identical with that of a Divine Personality. Take again the words, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Why was it that the Jews "sought the more to kill Him" but because they understood Him to say "that God was His Father, making Himself

[8] St. John iii. 16, 17, 18. [9] St. John iii. 29-36.

equal with God?"[1] There is no ambiguity here about the interpretation passed upon His words, or upon the writer's intention in recording them. Jesus replies in His most emphatic manner, wholly undaunted by the impression He had conveyed, which to encourage and not repress would have been the height of unpardonable and most audacious blasphemy, except upon one condition, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do, for what things soever he doeth these also doeth the Son likewise."[2] He affirms "that the Father loveth the Son and showeth him all things that himself doeth," that the Son's quickening whom He will is the counterpart of the Father's raising the dead; that the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that the Son is to be honoured precisely as the Father is honoured; nay more, that if the Son is despoiled of honour then neither is the Father honoured. He declares again most emphatically that the hearing of His word so as to believe on Him that sent Him is for all men the one passage from death unto life. That the hour is at hand when hearing the voice of the Son of God "the dead" "that hear shall live," for that "as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."[3]

In the face of assumptions such as these the

[1] St. John v. 18. [2] St. John v. 19. [3] St. John v. 20-26.

challenge that He had greater witness than that of John, which some of the Jews had been disposed to esteem highly and to accept, that challenge being the assertion that His own works done in the Father's name bore witness of Him, becomes at once of the most formidable and emphatic character. Either the works were not done and the assumptions were nothing better than inflated boastings, or else being done the assumptions were amply justified. Or, on the other hand, if we choose to say that the works were not accompanied by any such assumptions as the writer affirms, then these works being exclusively of the nature of works of mercy, it becomes unintelligible why they should have excited the animosity with which they were received. Or, once more, if we choose to assert that no works were wrought and no assumptions made, then we can only stand aghast at the ingenuity and fertility of invention, no less than the stubbornness of complicity, with which four writers, wholly independent and it is alleged discordant, should have undertaken to relate a history, which, whatever its difficulties or discrepances, is uniformly consistent in this respect.

It were a needless tax upon your patience, brethren, to bring in array before you every single passage in this Evangelist in which Jesus speaks of God in the terms "My Father" or "The Father;" moreover, it is plain that taken alone such terms are inconclusive and may be used

by any man; it is only in their context that they become inferentially of unambiguous significance. Take, for instance, one passage out of many in the sixth chapter, where these phrases constantly occur. "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. . . . I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." What is this but a claim to the possession of those resources which belong only to the Infinite and the Eternal, while it assumes an origin which is distinctly more than human when taken in connection with other words which follow shortly after, "not that any man," it should be any one, τις, "hath seen the Father save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father." Or again, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." Can He who said "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth" have spoken thus or been represented as speaking thus, if after all He was only the foremost among the sons of men, the best and wisest man; yea, even the highest and holiest manhood, in the thought of the Evangelist? If belief on Him is the one condition of everlasting life, then He can be nothing less than, as Simon Peter called Him, the Son of the Living God;[4] that is to say, His

[4] In the midst of the accumulation of evidence before us we can

humanity is the avenue which ends not in itself, but leads right on till it brings us to the one source of life, the essential Deity of God, a life which we are taught is not in the humanity itself but is in the Word or Only Begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father.[5]

Take again the words, "I am the light of the world,"[6] in connection with the Evangelist's own declaration that the Word was the true light which lighteth every man, and the statement "I know whence I came and whither I go,"[7] which, if meant to be literally true, can assuredly be predicated of no mortal man; and the assertion "If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also,"[8] which can alone be understood as a claim to identity of nature with the Highest. Again, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man ye shall know that I am,"[9] "I speak that which I have seen with my Father,"[1] "I proceeded forth and came from God,"[2] taken in connection with that climax of self-assertion, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am," which elicited from His adversaries the attempt to stone Him for blasphemy—can only be interpreted as an assumption of equal honours with

afford to surrender this the received reading, if need be, for ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ Θεοῦ, but cf. St. Matt. xvi. 16.

[5] St. John vi. 57; i. 4, 18; v. 30. [6] St. John viii. 12.

[7] St. John viii. 14. [8] St. John viii. 19. [9] St. John viii. 28.

[1] St. John viii. 38. [2] St. John viii. 42.

God and a proof that the writer intended to represent Jesus as offering to His nation what they felt to be the insult of a claim to personal identity with the Divine Being.

Once more, the interview of the man born blind with Jesus after his sight had been given him affords the same evidence. In reply to the question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" he asks, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" and upon our Lord's answer, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee," he replies, "Lord, I believe." Then adds the Evangelist, "and he worshipped Him,"[3] in order to indicate the true character and import of the faith professed.

The whole teaching and argument of the tenth chapter becomes absolutely meaningless, illogical, and inconsequent except upon the supposition that the words "I and my Father are One" supply the key to it. The man who wrote this chapter saw in Jesus nothing less than the human personality of God, the express image of the Father, and unless we throw ourselves, provisionally if not sincerely, into the position of the speaker as here represented, and are willing for the time to adopt his own ground, it becomes hopelessly impossible to discover anything like a rational direction of thought in the language ascribed to Jesus, or intelligible conduct on the part of His

[3] St. John ix. 35-38.

adversaries. Our only conclusion can be that in the mind of the Evangelist, "the Father" was "in" Jesus, and Jesus "in" the Father.[4]

Again, when Jesus hears of the death of Lazarus He says, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby,"[5] using of Himself a title which Martha recognises and adopts, and one which is ratified and warranted by the subsequent events at the grave of her deceased brother. If the reanimation of the dead body of Lazarus was an actual fact, there is every reason to believe that this language was used both by Jesus and by Martha, for the writer who relates the one records the other, and if we accept his testimony in one case we may accept it in both. But the language if used by Christ was unquestionably justified by the sequel, for being used it would not have been recorded had it been followed by failure or disconcerted by defeat. At least the Evangelist believed and wished others to believe, that the arrogant claims of Jesus were not falsified by the event.

In the next chapter we find the remarkable citation from Isaiah, which proves that the writer making it intended to identify Jesus with the God whom the prophet beheld in vision, "These things said Esaias when he saw His glory and spake of Him;"[6] and his observation, "They loved the

[4] St. John x. 30, 38. [5] St. John xi. 4.

[6] St. John xii. 41. See Pearson on the Creed, i. 160, Oxford edit.

praise of men more than the praise of *God*" in reference to those who shrunk from the reproach of ejection from the synagogue for the name of Christ, is further illustrated by the words that follow immediately, "Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me, and he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me," which, if actually spoken by Christ, show that the claims of the disciple were in no sense greater than those of the Master, being an assertion of His personal position in the scale of existence as emphatic and unambiguous as we can well conceive.

It is not possible to understand the transactions and discourses of the Maunday recorded in the thirteenth chapter unless we assume for the time the writer's own position that Jesus was the incarnate God. When we receive Him, as God acting, God speaking, God revealing Himself, then everything becomes intelligible on that basis, as it unquestionably is on no other; or to put it less forcibly, if need be, it becomes more intelligible than on any other.

The same remark applies with equal justice to the remaining chapters of the Gospel. However, we may attempt to explain logically or scientifically the exact relation subsisting between the Father and the Son, which one would have thought was a subject that might well be admitted to baffle the intellect, and one that the reverent

mind ought ever to regard as calling for adoration rather than supplying material for definition and logomachy, certain it is that to the naturally earnest but obtuse mind of Philip, who out of the deep yearning of his eager and unsatisfied humanity exclaimed, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us," Jesus answered, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Wearied with the endless strife of Patri-passionism and Sabellianism, of Tritheism and orthodoxy, and of the intellectual gladiator-show from age to age exhibited on the broad field of sacred thought, how unspeakable the relief of taking refuge in these simple words of Jesus! That which the human heart instinctively and insatiably longs after is the vision of its God—to see the glory of the living God. To the heart so thirsting and longing Jesus says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" "Look on me, and behold your God;" "Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." He sets before us the perfection of humanity in a Son who is Himself the truest manifestation of the ultimate God, and that God a Father.

But I check myself, for the necessities of the task imposed upon us demand that we receive not these words as in any sense authoritative but only as criticism itself, the most icy criticism, cannot demur to our receiving them, namely, as a witness to the thought and intention of the writer.

According, then, to his representation, Jesus declares Himself in language the more intelligible to the wants of the heart because in paradoxical defiance of scientific accuracy, as the very incarnation of the personal God, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." As to the meaning and import of these words there can be no question; it is unmistakeable what they mean. Here, if anywhere, Jesus identifies Himself with the very being of the personal God. "I and my Father are One."

And in the remainder of these Paschal discourses it is virtually the same. He is in the Father, and the Father in Him. The Father dwelleth in Him, and doeth the works. He goeth unto the Father. He that loveth Him shall be loved of the Father. The Father will send the Comforter in His name. The Father is greater than He, which would be an obvious truism if He were nothing but the highest manhood. The Father is the husbandman who planteth and nurtureth the true Vine, which is His humanity. He hath called His disciples friends, for all things that He has heard of His Father He has made known unto them. Whatsoever they shall ask of the Father in His name, He will give it them. He that hateth Him, hateth His Father also. He will send the Comforter unto them from the Father, who Himself is the spirit of truth, and proceedeth from the Father. If He goes not

away, the Comforter will not come unto them, but if He departs, He will send Him unto them. All things that the Father hath are His. The time cometh when He will show them plainly of the Father. He came out from God, forth from the Father, and is come into the world; again He leaves the world, and goeth to the Father. Though they shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Him alone, yet He is not alone, because the Father is with Him.

It is needless to examine further the last prayer of Jesus, because the teaching of the previous discourses is only accumulated and summarised in it, and no additional elements of importance bearing upon our present subject are contained therein.

The evidence of the remaining chapters is very soon collected. When apprehended by the band of Judas, the men who apprehended Jesus went backwards and fell to the ground on hearing His announcement, "I am."[7] Taken with their immediate context, these words doubtless refer to Jesus of Nazareth as their predicate; but having been used before by Jesus, without any such predicate, in a sense far more awful and significant, their meaning here may perhaps be designedly ambiguous. When arraigned before Pilate the Jews affirmed unhesitatingly, "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."[8] And finally, the

[7] St. John xviii. 5, 6. [8] St. John xix. 7.

writer sets his own seal to all that has gone before by declaring, in direct and explicit terms, his own purpose in recording it: "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God."[9]

It would seem, then, in the face of this large amount of evidence, impossible to deny that the intention of the writer was to exhibit Jesus in His twofold capacity, first as Messiah, and secondly, as the Son of God, of co-equal power and majesty with God, and essentially one with Him. What, then, is our position? It must be remembered that we are constructing an argument on the ground of an hypothesis that the date of the Gospel is A.D. 150 and its author unknown. At this period, then, an unknown writer propounded these opinions about Jesus Christ. They were manifestly opinions of the truth of which he himself was profoundly convinced. Is there any reason to believe that he invented them? With regard to the opinion of Jesus being the Christ, *this* cannot have been his own invention; for before his time the people who were called Christians bore witness by their very name to it as a common feature of his and their belief. With regard to the other point, the Godhead of Jesus, it is not possible to assert that this writer was the first to propound it; for, before his time, the undoubted Epistles of St. Paul necessarily imply it,

[9] St. John xx. 31.

while the date of others which have been without sufficient cause disputed, is prior to that proposed for the fourth Gospel, and their witness on this subject is scarcely less decided and conspicuous than its own.[1] If, then, we are right so far, it would seem that the fourth Evangelist is in no way responsible for the abstract truth or falsehood of his most essential and conspicuous doctrines. As they were not conceived or originated by him, he is not primarily answerable for their verity. They were first accepted as true on other authority than his own, and *if true*, they do not stand or fall with him. If, on the other hand, they are *not* true, he is not chargeable with having proposed them to the acceptance of the Church, or for having added them to the fabric of her belief, because it is certain that they were commonly accepted and believed before. His Gospel, then, may have been received, because it was found to express more fully and conclusively than it had hitherto been expressed that which was already lying in a semi-conscious state in the mind of the Church. It certainly was not received, because it propounded new and important doctrines which were felt to be attractive, because new. It precipitated, in a concrete and palpable form, elements which had hitherto been held in solution, but not one of which owed its existence to the process of precipitation. How, then, is it possible that these

[1] See Lecture vi.

doctrines, if they are true, are dependent on the establishment of this author's identity, when, if they are false, it is absolutely certain that he is not responsible for their invention ?

To put a parallel case. The creed of Nicæa is known to have come into existence at a certain date, and certain circumstances are known to have attended its promulgation. It is not pretended that that creed added anything to the bulk of the Church's faith, the elements expressed in it were there before. But the creed itself must stand or fall ultimately upon the faithfulness with which the authors of it fulfilled their trust. If it could be proved that substantial additions were made to the traditional deposit of the faith, then on all Catholic principles those additions must be condemned. But coming into existence as it did, the creed of Nicæa is formally the production of the Council there assembled. The Fathers composing that Council are responsible for the form, but not in any way responsible for the substance of the creed, which was intended and supposed to be an expression of the faith once delivered to the saints. If the form is inaccurate, they are to blame, but not for the substance, so far as the form has accurately expressed it. Yet we receive the creed of Nicæa on the authority of the Council that drew it up. What, then, was that authority ? It was the authority of the Church at the time represented by the 318 individual Fathers who

composed the Council. But who these Fathers were, with a few exceptions, we know not; authorities differ even as to their number. By what selection, or proportion of them, the creed was drawn up, we know not; least of all do we know to what individuals of the Council particular clauses are to be attributed. As regards *authors*, the creed is an anonymous production. An influence which predominated in producing it was doubtless the mind of Athanasius, who at the time was only a deacon. But what was the special share he had in it we cannot tell. How, then, is the authority of the creed being a purely formal instrument in any way dependent on the identity of its particular authors. It may have been the work of one, or of ten, or of fifty Fathers. If it was the work of one, we may assume, but cannot establish his identity; if it was the work of fifty, or of ten, we are wholly at a loss to do so.

Now, the case of the fourth Gospel is not dissimilar, but is even stronger. For that is in no sense a formal instrument. The form of it is wholly subordinate to its substance, which is conspicuous in manifold ways, and transparent in language of unsurpassed lucidity. Here we know the date, hypothetically accepting that which has been proposed to us, and in a certain sense the *authors* of the composition; for we have witnesses to its very general acceptance by the Church as an authoritative work at a period shortly afterwards,

which acceptance could not have been the growth of a day; and those who thus accepted it were its authors in the sense that the great majority of Fathers at the Council of Nicæa, who could have borne no part in drawing up the creed, were nevertheless the authors of it, inasmuch as they set their seal of attestation and acceptance to its doctrines, they acquiesced in its contents, were a party to its teaching, consented to and embraced the substance of belief which it embodied; but as here our ignorance of the actual author of its several clauses is no hindrance to our acceptance of its authority, if we accept it, so neither can our supposed ignorance of the author of that Gospel, which does not depend upon clauses for the conveyance of its meaning, but upon its testimony, as a whole, to certain cardinal positions, be any valid hindrance to our acceptance of the teaching which is everywhere so transparent throughout it, and is explicitly summed up by the writer in the verse to which we have referred, unless it can be shown that that teaching was absolutely original to, and therefore must stand or fall with, him. It must be remembered that we are speaking now, not of the matters of fact recorded in the Gospel, but of the general purport of its teaching, as defined by the author himself. Its authority in matters of fact is altogether another point with which we are not now concerned.

All, then, that we are anxious to maintain at

the present time is this, that the testimony of the fourth Evangelist, as far as it goes, and taken only for what it is worth, on the hypothesis we have accepted, is clear and unmistakeable. He may have been deceived; he certainly was human, and therefore liable to err. His opinions may have been visionary and incorrect; he may have formed a wrong estimate of Jesus; but at all events, and under all circumstances, his witness to Him as the Christ, and as the Son of God, is unfaltering in its constancy and unambiguous in its meaning. We may, indeed, reject his testimony, but there cannot possibly be two opinions as to what that testimony is. In the middle of the second century he had learnt to regard Christianity as *the absolute religion*. He looked on it as the fulfilment of all that was past, as containing in itself the germ and promise of all that was to come. It was at once the centre and the circumference of all truth. The knowledge of Christ, as the revelation of the Father, was to him that eternal life which, as it was raised above the flux of time, so it was independent of all the mutations of thought, the revolutions and oscillations of speculative belief. It was not to vary as they varied, but was the unerring standard to which they were to be reduced. Again, I repeat, whether or not the Evangelist was right, it cannot be denied that such was the tenor of his declared conviction.

Now then comes another point, which, bearing

as it does on the question before us, cannot rightly be overlooked. This writer was plainly of opinion that the facts he had undertaken to deliver, which he gave, at all events, on the authority of *an* eye-witness, were not so important in themselves as they were in the results to which they pointed. If the results were correct, the facts, we may be quite sure, could not have been far wrong, as they were related. At any rate, if the results did *not* follow from the facts, it is clear that in this writer's mind the facts themselves, however correctly narrated, would have been matters of trivial importance. In his opinion, if Jesus was not the Christ, and not the Son of God, then the circumstance of blood and water flowing from His pierced and lifeless side, and by parity of reasoning other circumstances likewise, was, comparatively speaking, a matter of trifling interest. The truth of this circumstance, for which, however, he vouched, was, after all, subordinate to a higher truth. For *it* clearly might have been true, and yet that higher truth might not have followed. But it was the proclamation of the higher truth on which he was intent, and it was with reference to this truth that he said, "These things are written that ye might believe; and that believing, ye might have life through his name."[2]

[2] It is most important to observe that the Evangelist's desire is not that he should be himself believed, but that life should be had through belief in Jesus.

There are, therefore, three conceivable positions with respect to the case in point. The facts related may be true, and the results alleged may follow from them; or the facts related may be true, and yet the results alleged may not follow from them; or the facts related may be false, in which case the results alleged cannot follow. Now, with regard to this writer, he declares unhesitatingly and unmistakeably that certain results do follow from the facts related. The whole object of his Gospel is to proclaim this truth. But if these results do follow,—that is to say, if Jesus *is* the Christ and the Son of God, the facts related cannot be *so* false as to prevent the results from following which are alleged to follow. Now, it is conceivable that these facts may be sufficiently true for this purpose, that is substantially true, even though this writer was not St. John, and was not himself an eye-witness, but had only received his narrative from an eye-witness, and had only written in the middle of the second century. For the facts related by him are by no means the only facts that can be produced which point in the same direction, nor is he the only writer who, from these or similar facts, has deduced a like result.

It is illogical, therefore, and inconsequent, to make the abstract truth, for which the fourth Evangelist contends, to turn upon the resolution of various critical questions relating to his identity

and his age, or even to depend upon the minute verbal accuracy of particular portions of his narrative. It is not fair to say, These things are so uncertain that we may reasonably be excused for holding our judgment in suspense upon the further and more abstruse questions at issue. For they are *not* so uncertain as is alleged, and even if they were, we should not be warranted in saying or acting thus. For the ultimate question in debate is one of such transcendant magnitude, and such paramount importance, that we are not warranted in putting it aside until we have not only discovered some probability that it may be false, but have proved conclusively that it cannot possibly be true.

Certain it is that critical writers on the authenticity of St. John's Gospel, waive altogether the question of Jesus being the Christ or the Son of God. They postpone it as one which is wholly beside and beyond them, and they have a right to do so. Nay, it is their bounden duty not to suffer the consideration of this question to bias the conclusions of their judgment. Only let it be borne in mind that it is on the resolution of this question in one way, and in one way alone, that they can be in harmony with this writer, whoever he was. If they resolve this question otherwise, they are opposed not only to his identity with St. John, but to his declared opinions as an anonymous writer asking for no more authority than

the authority of the truth which he proclaims. If they come to the conclusion that Christianity is not the absolute religion—that Jesus is not the only begotten Son of God—that He was wrong in calling Himself the Christ—then the fourth Gospel is no less decidedly against them than if it had been written by St. John. Its authority as a genuine work may be lessened, but not its authority so far as the doctrine it inculcates *may* happen to be the truth. Its testimony to Jesus on these points, as the testimony of an independent writer living in the middle of the second century, is no less distinct and emphatic. It is a clear and conclusive proof that there was at least one man then who believed in Jesus as the Son of God. And he wrote for the express purpose of bringing others to the same belief. As long, then, as they are not brought to it, they are not disciples of this writer, whether or not they are disciples of Christ. They take a view of the person and character of Jesus which is different from his. They may be in the abstract right or wrong, but they are at variance with him. The very anonymousness of the style which he has adopted is an abiding protest on his part against shifting the ground of the argument he has raised off the claims of his Master on to that of his own personal identity. The position which he puts before us, and would have us adopt as our own, is that of the Samaritans whom he, with touches

so life-like, has drawn saying, "Now, we believe not, because of thy word, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." "These things," he says, "are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through His Name."

# LECTURE IV

## ST. JOHN'S APPEAL TO THE INWARD WITNESS

ST. JOHN v. 10, 11, 12

*"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: He that believeth not God hath made him a liar because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."*

THE position at which we have now arrived has shown us that the main issue which is raised by the writer of the fourth Gospel himself is one which does not turn on the question of his own identity, or even on the abstract correctness or incorrectness of his expressed opinions, but upon the clear and decided testimony he has offered to the Divine nature of Jesus. The one question he has himself proposed is, Whether or not Jesus is the Christ the Son of God?

Now we know from various sources that this Jesus was not an imaginary creation of his own; that the memory of such a person was indelibly stamped upon the world at the time when the

writer lived; and we know, moreover, that however original his manner of writing may have been there is undoubted proof that the opinion itself was not original with him. He may have stated it more forcibly or more largely than others, but he certainly was not the first to state it.

And it is, of course, admitted on all hands that if pretensions like these were advanced in favour of any ordinary or even extraordinary person they would demand the very fullest confirmation, or else be entitled to no regard whatever. The very fact, therefore, of their being advanced and successfully advanced in the case of Jesus of Nazareth is to some extent an evidence that they did not lack a measure of confirmation, because there was nothing in the character or history of Jesus calculated at first sight to command this success. There were in Him none of those qualities which do instinctively command the world's admiration or allegiance. His success was a success based wholly upon goodness. Power, greatness, wealth, conquest, brilliant achievement, popular enthusiasm, and the like, were influences unknown to Him. It was not for these things that He was proclaimed, or proclaimed Himself, the Son of God; but solely on account of His surpassing goodness, sealed as it was with the triumphant paradox of the cross. And if from our acquaintance with the world we determine, as we not improbably may,

that goodness alone, resulting in defeat so disastrous, was scarcely adequate to the producing of consequences so conspicuously successful, we shall not be able otherwise to explain them unless we admit the apparent probability of a series of miracles issuing in the crowning miracle of the resurrection.[1] But if admitting, as we may be constrained to admit, this long series of miracles, as an indispensable element in the character and history of Jesus, we shall hardly be disposed to believe that those to whom we owe the record of our Lord's miracles have *substantially* perverted His discourses. Admitting the resurrection as a fact, it seems difficult to imagine any reason the disciples can have had to represent themselves as being taken by surprise on that occasion, notwithstanding the way they had been prepared for it, when, if they had not been prepared, it could only have been to them a matter of the most extreme surprise ; while, on the other hand, if they had been prepared, the miracle of the resurrection at once assumes another character from the fact of its having been deliberately foretold by Jesus.

[1] It was this fact that impressed the vigorous mind of Dante when he was being catechised by St. Peter.

> Se il mondo si rivolse al cristianesmo,
> Diss' io, senza miracoli, quest' uno
> E tal, che gli altri non sono il centesmo;
> Chè tu entrasti povero e digiuno
> In campo, a seminar la buona pianta,
> Che fu giá vite, ed ora è fatta pruno.
>
> *Par.* xxiv. 106-111.

We can hardly suppose that sitting down to record the resurrection, which we assume now to have been a fact, they could gratuitously insert the feature of their own surprise and show yet further that it was inexcusable because their Lord had said that He would rise again. If He had said so, why should they be surprised, and if He had not said so, how could they fail to be? Whereas if He had said that He would rise again and actually did rise, what are we to think of this exact agreement of promise and performance? Only one of two things, either that the death and resurrection were a reality, or else that there was some mistake in them; either one or the other was a delusion practised by Jesus upon His disciples. But, here, we are thrown back upon one of the primary foundations on which the claims of Jesus to be the Son of God are found to rest, namely, His goodness. It is plain to the most careless observer of the Gospel history that the reason why our Lord was slain was because of His goodness. He was too good for the generation in which His lot was cast. They did not crucify Him because of His miracles, but because His miracles seemed to stamp His goodness, and because His goodness seemed to stamp His miracles, and because both seemed to lend undue prominence and weight to His intolerable arrogance in claiming to be the Son of God. As we have seen before, unless He did claim to be so,

even His goodness and His miracles combined would scarcely have been sufficient to arouse the animosity which was felt against Him.

And it is precisely the same now. The verdict of mankind has long ago determined that the moral character of Jesus is not to be surpassed. It stands out like the highest of the mountain chain, in unrivalled majesty, soaring far and clear above the host of lesser peaks which would presume to compare with it among the moralists, the philosophers, the philanthropists, and the sages of the world. It is little less than impiety to say of Him that He was the best, the holiest, the purest, the least selfish, the most heroic, the tenderest, simplest, and most transparent character ever seen among men. Whether or not this is the way in which the Gospel narrative has presented Jesus, certain it is that it has originated such a conception and fixed it in the imagination of mankind, to which the Jesus of the Gospels is at once the nearest and the unique approximation. We may withhold from Him the honours of the Godhead, but we can scarcely deny to Him this as His just and indisputable meed.

Again, whatever theory may be advanced in explanation of our Lord's miracles in the present day, it can hardly be affirmed that there were not in those miracles phenomena which require to be explained. The evidence for some mighty works of some kind having been systematically per-

formed is so overwhelming that whatever our theory of causation or the uniformity of natural laws may be, it is scarcely consistent with the recognised principles of historic criticism to assert deliberately that He did not work miracles. Or, howsoever this may be, certain it is that a man may accept as an unexplained phenomenon, for which he cannot account, the fact of Jesus working miracles, and yet demur very seriously to the confession which nevertheless His own language makes imperative that He was Himself the Divine Being veiled in human form, working, labouring, teaching, suffering, and dying for men.

Now it is precisely at this very point that the testimony of the fourth Evangelist comes in. He says, "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name." It is to be observed that if these signs are rejected there are many others which Jesus did; those others were not different from, but of the same character and bearing with these. They are not now under our consideration, for they were attested by competent witnesses and are, in fact, commonly received. There is undoubted and irresistible evidence that miracles of some kind were wrought. But these have been recorded as samples of the rest, and they are

recorded not only as samples of the rest, but also as signs of something further, which, indeed, if wrought at all, they all were, namely, as signs of a further and more remote truth which is shadowed forth and indicated, rather than established by logical demonstration, which may be rationally believed, but cannot be mathematically proved—that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. The signs here recorded, then, were meant to lead us on to this truth, but so also were the rest; the purport and object of all was the same. It was not that these signs were more striking and significant than the others, or had a bearing which the others had not, but this was the end and design of all—that we might believe; and believe, it must be observed, not the *signs* but the truth to which the signs pointed.

It is clear, then, that until we have believed, the Evangelist, whoever he was, has written in vain for us. And it is likewise clear that until we have done something more than disputed his identity, or even disproved his veracity, there still remains a considerable body of evidence which leaves our responsibility exactly where it was before to decide whether or not Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. For this responsibility must remain very much the same, as long as there exists any adequate proof at all that Jesus of Nazareth truly lived, that He was a man of extraordinary virtue, of pure and sublime moral

character, that He wrought miracles, or acquiesced in and cherished the belief among His followers that He wrought them, that He was put to death by the Jews for His arrogance and obstinacy in professing to be the Son of God, and that, after His death, it was a matter of considerable notoriety that He was reported, and very generally believed, to have risen from the dead, as He had declared He would rise.

Nor can we entirely realise the supposed case of this Evangelist, or fully appreciate the character of his testimony, till we put ourselves side by side with him at the time when we have decided that he wrote. For conceive him, at the interval of a hundred and twenty years after the death of Christ, coming out of his obscurity, in this way, with no credentials, and with no clue to his identity but a possible vague tradition about a certain disciple whom Jesus loved, and declaring in the most emphatic manner that this very Jesus was then alive, that He was at that moment the Christ and the Son of God, that He was then the object of faith and to be believed.

We do his position great and conspicuous injustice when we represent it as tantamount to making an assertion of higher claims for the historic character of Jesus than we may have been in the habit of conceding; as though a writer should undertake, for example, to vindicate the memory of Cardinal Wolsey or of Richard the

Third, or should assay to prove that Cæsar, or Hannibal, or any illustrious personage of this kind, was even a greater general or a greater man than we had imagined him to be, great as that was, for in the present case there was nothing of the kind. The fourth Evangelist was not labouring to prove how great Jesus had been; he was endeavouring to show Who He then was. He came to the men of his own day and said, This man Jesus whom I have spoken of, is now, at this moment, the Christ, the Son of God. Believe it, and you shall have life through His name. He took the character of Jesus as he found it, neither greater nor less, and he said, This man *is* the Son of God; and any one hearing that message could not but feel that it had an immediate bearing on himself, for it offered to do something for him, to give him life upon believing it.

The verity of the message then would turn and turn wholly upon its power to give this life. An understanding was implied on both sides that the message itself was worthy of credit; for if not, on the messenger's own premises, there could be no reality in his offer of life. But this offer was one which admitted of being practically tested, apart from the previous consideration, which was set aside, of the truth of the facts which the message assumed. In short, the question for the men who lived in the days of Christ was the validity of His claims to be then considered the Son of God.

But the question which the fourth Gospel raises is not whether He *was then*, but whether He *is now* the Son of God. We are, in some sense, becoming less and less competent to decide the former question, because so much of the ground we have to go upon is obscure, and conjecture is invoked to supply the place of certainty, but the other question is one which is ever asking for our decision, while the way in which it is proposed reminds us that there is only one condition upon which it can be decided, which is Belief; and that upon so deciding it the practical evidence of possessing life is guaranteed to us.

It is plain, then, that as long as we do not believe in Jesus as the living Son of God, or the Son of the Living God, we are out of harmony with the fourth Evangelist, if he be St. John. If, however, we are constrained to admit that he is not St. John, his testimony still remains as clear and distinct as before to the same effect. That is to say, his Gospel is a witness to us that one man had found life upon belief in a living Christ, and that others might find it too on the same conditions. Now this is a matter in which the testimony of one man is as good as that of another. The testimony of James or Peter would have been as good as that of John. The testimony of a poor beggar, or a sick woman, or a suffering prisoner, to the same effect, would not by any means be inconsiderable, more especially if found

practically to counterbalance the evils of poverty, sickness, or loss of freedom in each particular case. This, of course, is on the supposition that we reject the testimony of St. John as a personal witness to what he had himself *seen*. There even then remains a testimony which is by no means to be despised. It will of course be said that this testimony is of no use whatever except to those who have it. The inward witness cannot be advanced in the place of valid external testimony. It is useless to speak of the inward witness to those who feel that the other evidences are insufficient. Why tell me I ought to believe when it is the foundation of my faith that I feel to be so insecure? Can any amount of personal obstinacy make up for the unreasonableness of the ground on which it rests? Can gaps in the evidence be supplied by the mere intensity of personal conviction? Because if so, in that case, faith should be strong in an inverse ratio to the reason that can be given for it. We should be most confident where we are least sure. Besides, to put forward considerations of this kind when professedly dealing with the evidences of the faith has a tendency to lead men away from the exact issue before them. They are endeavouring to deal in a calm, dispassionate, and judicial spirit with the precise question in hand, and you break in obtrusively with your irrelevant appeal to the inward witness and tell them that the question is one which cannot be decided

except upon believing upon the evidence advanced, which evidence is itself the subject of debate. What course can be more illogical or less calculated to have any influence with reasonable men?

Now to such objections our answer is, Then be it so. We are not careful to determine whether or not the method is logical. We are most especially careful not in any way to warp or to overestimate the evidence or to misrepresent its character. But this we do say, that the evidence, being what it *is*, neither more nor less, and being accepted for what it is, there is given to the believer over and beyond this evidence an amount of additional evidence which we admit to be simply personal, but which is at once both conclusive to him and yet wholly contingent upon belief. That is to say, the believer has a witness which he can alone have as a believer, which from its very nature he cannot have except he believes, but which he may have upon believing.

Now the bearing of this truth upon those who do not believe is simply this. If the amount of evidence were greater than it really is it would still be inoperative as long as belief were withheld. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."[2] The multiplication of signs may be indefinitely great, and yet the thing signified

[2] St. Luke xvi. 31.

by them may not be apprehended. There is unquestionably a special faculty needed for belief, just as there is a special organ needed for sight, or hearing, or the exercise of any other sense. This is a truth which is not only self-evident, but one also which is constantly inculcated in the Scriptures, "In thy light we shall see light;"[3] "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;"[4] "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."[5]

Now, here again, if this is a truth—if it is a fact that the believer in Jesus as the Son of God knows in whom he has believed, as he who has not believed cannot know—then it also becomes a matter of subordinate interest who was the author of the statement. Let us put the case that it was not St. John. Does that invalidate the truth of it? The man who wrote these words, whoever he was, had learnt this truth by belief in Jesus. His faith had taught it him. We may reject his statement, but we cannot invalidate it. There will still be those who will accept it. To them it will continually prove itself true. To others it will indeed be no evidence of the faith; but this is what it will do, it will convict them of unbelief; that is to say, it will be a permanent and persistent witness to an essential and inherent difference between them and the believers whom they dis-

[3] Ps. xxxvi. 9. [4] St. Matt. xviii. 3. [5] St. John v. 10.

like, ridicule, and despise; and so it will ever be, no matter who the writer was, until they can not only affirm, as they may with justice, that it is no evidence of the faith, but also that it is a statement inaccurate in itself,—that is, until they can prove to demonstration the exact contrary, which is, He that believeth hath *not* the witness in himself.

But, in order to show more plainly that, if illogical ourselves, we are not one whit more illogical than the unknown writer[6] of this Epistle, let us examine what he says, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness," that is, the witness to the Sonship of the Son of God in himself, but "he that believeth not God" (which, you observe, begs the question that it is *God* whom he does not believe, a momentous *petitio principii*, no less than a momentous issue) "hath made him a liar," or given God the lie; wherefore? "because he believeth not the record that God hath given of his Son." And what record is that? Miracles, prophecy, the spread of Christianity, the moral character of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, or the sublimity of His teaching? Is it any one or all of these combined? No! not any one nor all of them combined, but "this

[6] Such is the verdict which recent criticism has passed upon him. "He has no logical ability, and the circle of his ideas is confined." —Davidson, Introd. ii. 311. Yet more surprising are the words which follow, "He does not enter deeply into the interior life." Can *we* venture to suppose that *we* have entered more deeply?

is the record that God hath given to us,"—that is, to us Christians, not to any others, as we shall see presently, but to us Christians, "eternal life;" another esoteric reason, then, which appeals exclusively to those who are already within the charmed circle of Christianity; the actual record which God hath given—which men are asked to believe—is one that Christians only have received, for "this life" which we Christians have "is in His Son," and in Him alone; because it is a matter of fact within the cognisance of Christians, but hidden from the world at large, that "he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." In other words, the one witness which the believer hath is the Son of God in him; this is God's own especial witness or record, which is, to the Christian, life—eternal life; but he only has, or can have this witness upon believing in the Son; for if it is not the Son in whom he believes, then it is not the Son who dwells in him, and then he has not life, which is the one witness of God; for he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. That is to say, the writer argues in a hopelessly vicious circle, which can be nothing but vicious until we accept implicitly the one centre from which he draws it, which is Jesus the Son of God. Accept that, and however circular the reasoning may be, our eye travels onwards from the centre along every radius till it is lost successively in each direction in the immensity

of bliss, absorbed in the infinity of light and life.

We maintain, then, that it is impossible to acquit this writer of a method of reasoning at once illogical and inconclusive, because he advanced as a proof of his statement that which could only be a proof to those who had already accepted his statement. He said that the Christian's greatest evidence was one that the Christian alone could have—one therefore that was no evidence to the non-Christian, but one which, if a fact, was equally valid as evidence to the Christian, whatever the period when the writer lived.

We may make this period as late as we please; to take an extreme limit, after the Nicene Council, if we please, and yet the statement, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself," if true, is not affected in the degree of its truth thereby.

But let us now make the opposite supposition, and admit, for the moment, that the author of it was St. John, then what follows? Simply this, that the beloved Apostle of Jesus, the companion of His ministry, the chosen witness of His glory on the mount and His agony in the garden,—he who had known his Master as none else had ever known Him, who had been favoured, therefore, with evidence such as was granted to no other, and never can be granted to us, who had the fullest possible proof that can be borne in upon

human reason,—nevertheless considered and taught that, after all, the best and strongest evidence that even he or those to whom he wrote could have, was the inward and personal evidence that God had given to him and them that eternal life which was in His Son, and which they had not known till they had believed in Him. That is to say, he declared that the fullest proof that the Christian had or could have was one which was and could be no proof whatever to the non-Christian; while it is obvious that his assertion was tantamount to saying that they who chose to deny the inward witness *as a fact*, proved by that denial that they were incompetent to decide upon it, being, as it was, a matter of which they were ignorant, and lying altogether beyond the region of their own experience.

You will see, then, that, whether or not we are wrong in dilating upon the inward witness to Christ, when professedly discussing the subject of Christian evidences, it is certain that the writer of this Epistle dwelt very strongly upon it, and that in a way which is the more striking if we suppose him to have been St. John. And it is, moreover, equally certain that we should do no justice on this hypothesis to the witness of St. John to Christ unless we were to take into consideration the bearing of the inward witness upon the subject of the evidences generally. And its bearing may be stated thus: Suppose it to be allowed that the

external evidences to Christ were complete and satisfactory—on the basis of this Epistle, there would still be wanting, over and above these external evidences, that inward witness to Christ which could alone be given by the conscious possession of eternal life consequent upon belief. If, then, under any circumstances, this is a witness which is indispensable, how can we, *as Christians*, consent to neglect it altogether in considering the subject of Christian evidences? We can only do so by first renouncing our birth-right as Christians. We may, indeed, debate these subjects with the very strictest impartiality, and it is our bounden duty, as disciples of Him who bid us call no man our master upon the earth, to do so, but we must never forget that both Jesus and His Apostles equally declare that the chief and paramount evidence to Christ is bestowed upon conversion of the heart to Him, *and cannot be received without it.*

We may say, indeed, that the writer of this Epistle was not discussing Christian evidences, which to some extent is true, but still he was treating of the inward witness. Though, therefore, not directly proposing any argument which should have the object of convincing those who were not Christians, he was indirectly weakening the non-Christian cause by reminding Christians why they should demur to becoming non-Christians, by holding up to them a motive which

would be felt to be stronger and stronger in proportion as they became more and more Christian.

For the strength of the influence which this motive exercised was in proportion to the degree in which it was disengaged from the authority of the person giving it. The words, "He that believeth hath the witness in himself" did not influence, *if* they influenced, *because* they were St. John's, or because they were accepted as inspired, but because they awoke in those who accepted them an echo of the truth with which they were instinct—an assurance that they would awake a similar echo in all who should yield to them,—that is to say, they influenced exactly in proportion as those who received them became disciples of the writer, whoever he may have been—exactly in proportion as *they* received the testimony which he bore to the power of belief in the Sonship of the living Jesus. In other words, the secret of their power was not St. John, but Jesus.

We have only to substitute one or two alternative expressions in the place of this, "on the Son of God," in order to perceive its true force and bearing. For example, "He that believeth in my authority as the Apostle of Christ,"—"He that believeth in the inspiration of this Epistle,"—"He that believeth in its genuineness or canonicity, hath the witness in himself,"—the words not only cease to be true, as a matter of fact, but they become absolute nonsense. This may serve to

shew that the writer's statement contains in itself a challenge to the world, as an element which is at once inherent and inalienable. There is no *life* to be derived from any one of these alternative convictions ; because, for the object of the faith, a dead thought is substituted in the place of a living person. Even allowing, therefore, that it is of the nature of all belief, merely *as* belief, to become self-sustaining in proportion to its strength, as some may be willing to affirm, yet this does not depreciate the value of the writer's statement, *so far as it is true*, because, in order to satisfy the terms of his expression, there must be, in belief on the Son of God, an especial strength which does not belong, as an essential characteristic, to belief of any other kind at all. Consequently, although his words can only prove themselves positively to, or be *known* to be true by, those who believe in the truth of them, yet negatively they verify themselves in the case of others by detecting the absence of that which is stated to be alone the result of belief on the Son of God—namely, that witness which is supplied by the conscious possession of eternal life. For, *if they are true*, they shew conclusively that where there is not this inward witness of which they speak, there there is a deficient or ineffectual faith in Jesus as the living Son of God. The precise nature, therefore, of the testimony to Christ which is borne by these words, apart from all considera-

tions of authorship or the like, is that of the testimony which is borne by the expressed conviction of any sincere believer in the living Jesus, which, though it may be rejected or perchance excite ridicule, is nevertheless substantial testimony that does not pass away without a substantive result.

If, therefore, we would estimate the true character of this writer's language, we must bear in mind very distinctly what it is that he asserts. He does not say that Jesus was proved to have been the Son of God by the miracles which He wrought, or by the prophecies that converged in Him, or by the purity of His teaching, however true any one or all of these statements may have been. He approaches the matter in hand from a totally different quarter, and he says, "I, as an unknown man, and, so far as the world at large is concerned, as one who desires to remain unknown, emphatically declare that the Jesus whom we saw and knew personally—whom you know by the common report of those who likewise saw and knew Him, however that report has reached you—is now alive, and is the living Son of God; and I further declare that if you believe in Him, you shall have the witness in yourself, as he ever hath who believeth on Him, for you shall have in yourself that eternal life with which He lives in God." It is needless to observe how this declaration implied and involved the fact of our Lord's resurrection, and therefore of the generally supernatural

character of His life; but it is most important to remark that it is framed so as to shift the evidence to the claims of Jesus off from the supernatural witness of the past on to the supernatural and abiding witness of the continual present. "Jesus is *now* the Son of God, believe in Him, and you shall *know* he is." That is to say, the witness borne by this writer is of an eminently searching and practical character. He refuses to regard the question before him as one of abstract theory, which may or may not be true, and which involves no consequences in its issue. He is prepared to stake everything on the verdict of the present, and on the confirmation which the *living* Christ can give to the cardinal truth of His own existence in the present.

This we well know is not the method which the world would commonly adopt, nor is it one to find acceptance generally with men, but it nevertheless is *the* method which he has chosen to adopt, and it is one which perhaps may be shown by results to be not without its special advantages. Thus much at least is clear, that the present existence of Jesus Christ is not and cannot be proved by the establishment of the Gospel miracles as mere historical occurrences; for we may accept those miracles as such occurrences, and yet have no spiritual perception of the life of Jesus Christ. This life may follow, indeed, as a necessary truth which, accepting the miracles as premises, we

cannot refuse intellectually to accept; but it cannot follow or be proved, in this writer's sense, except through the operation of the Holy Ghost, for he says, "Hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us;"[7] "Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit;"[8] "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."[9] Here, again, in order to accept his statement, the existence and operation of the Holy Ghost must be conceded—a concession, however, which will at once cloud the issue—but a concession which the very nature of his argument imperatively demands.

Nor let it be said that we avail ourselves of an unwarrantable license in adopting substantially the same method of discourse, for that he wrote for believers, but that we are supposed to be reasoning with unbelievers, because the assertion does not hold good. Though it is quite true that this writer appealed to the Christian consciousness in a way that can only be appreciated by that consciousness in its highest development, yet it is also true that he wrote for the express purpose of stimulating such development. "These things write we unto you," he says, "*that your joy may be full.*"[1] "And this is his commandment *that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,*

[7] St. John ii. 24. [8] St. John iii. 13.
[9] St. John v. 6. [1] St. John i. 4.

and love one another as he gave us commandment."[2] "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, *and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*"[3] It is plain, therefore, that he contemplated in those to whom he wrote not only the fulness of Christian faith, but also that defective and undeveloped form of it to which alone this language is applicable. If, therefore, his method applies where faith is defective in a slight degree, it may likewise be not inapplicable where it is yet more deficient, if not wanting altogether.

It is one of the paradoxes of Christian teaching, which this writer at all events is by no means anxious to conceal, that we cannot believe without the operation of the Holy Spirit, while yet we cannot have the Holy Spirit except upon condition of believing. Paradoxical as this position is, it nevertheless is confessedly true, and the paradox is one which can only be resolved in practice. He who comes to Jesus as the living Christ with the sincere desire to believe, and the earnest prayer for light and guidance in the way to faith, *which is not more than may be reasonably demanded if it is a fact that Jesus is a living, operative Person,* shall not be suffered to walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

The very writer whose works we have been

[2] St. John iii. 23. [3] St. John v. 13.

considering, much as he dwells upon the need and power of faith, has yet given us the highest proof we can have of his perfect sympathy with unbelief, in the incident he alone has recorded in the life of Thomas. If that incident is only a romance, it yet shows us, as a romance-writer, his sympathy with the ideal character of the unbelieving Apostle. If, as we believe, it is the genuine record of the beloved disciple of a fact which actually occurred, it shows us something more, for it shows us that the compassionate heart of the Divine Man can feel compassionately towards the doubts and agonising difficulties of those who long to believe but cannot. For the unbelief of Thomas rose to a height of daring obstinacy which cannot frequently, if in any case, be equalled. It is plain not only that he must have had evidence of the very nature that our modern doubters ask for, and such as they cannot have, but also that every single convert whom Thomas brought to Christ must have believed upon less evidence than he himself had fixed as the limit on which alone he would believe. He stands out, therefore, as an example of resolute and determined scepticism, which cannot easily be surpassed; though also, thank God, as a bright example of earnest and intelligent belief. And it is not a little remarkable that a writer who has declared so plainly the nature and office, and dwelt so strongly on the importance of faith,

should nevertheless have recorded also the most conspicuous instance in Scripture of persistent unbelief. It at least suggests to us a fair presumption that his own belief, firm and decided as it was, rested notwithstanding on the widest, loftiest, and most intelligent foundation possible, inasmuch as it commanded a prospect which embraced the whole area of unbelief.

Nor again may we forget to see in the same fact an evidence that the method adopted by the writer of this Epistle, (supposing for the while that he was the author of the fourth Gospel), is one that is not altogether inappropriate for dealing with actual unbelief. There is nothing which so perplexes the unbelieving or the half-believing mind as the calm and deliberate conviction and the unmistakeable manifestation of simple and sincere belief. It unquestionably has its effect, though that effect may be imperceptible, and though it cannot be estimated. Nor is there any way more effectual of confronting the open or implied denials of the present day than by accepting much of the ground they occupy, and yet showing that a deep and earnest belief may be held in spite of them, because other conclusions than those they assume follow naturally from their provisionally admitted premises. Certain it is that no man can come forward and declare his belief in Jesus as the living Christ and the living Son of God, in such a way as to make his belief

felt to be a reality and not a falsehood, without thereby offering such testimony to Christ as cannot easily be silenced. Assertion may be contradicted, and argument may be confuted, but the deliberate confession of a childlike belief in Jesus is after all a substantive witness to Him which survives in spite of its own rejection.

Now this is the kind of witness which the writer before us has borne to Jesus. He has made us feel that his own belief was a reality and not a falsehood to *him*,—that it was a sincere and genuine conviction, and not one that was hypocritically assumed; for were we to assert even *that*, we should at once admit the abstract possibility of the thing assumed being real, which is what is now affirmed. And as this belief is a reality in *idea*, if not in the particular case of the writer before us, it bears witness to the reality of the cause from whence it was derived—vitality in the effects produced points unmistakeably to vitality in the cause producing them. However late then may have been the period at which these words were written, the very fact of their being written at all points to the inference that Jesus was then alive, not merely in the thought of the writer, but as a Living Influence which could alone avail to generate that thought which was confessedly dependent on a Living Source; for where there was no belief in the Son of God there there was no witness to His existence in the heart. The

expressed consciousness of life is evidence of life in the subject, when that consciousness is not arbitrary but obedient to an unvarying law—the law namely of belief in the Son of God; but if it is evidence of life in the subject, it is evidence also of a life external to itself producing it. Now if Jesus were dead, as Cæsar or Muhammad are dead, belief in His present existence could not produce this consciousness of life; but that it is produced is proved, not only by the very language of this writer, but likewise by the confessed experience of thousands and tens of thousands who have learnt to adopt his language as their own. If, therefore, belief in the present existence of Jesus Christ is the one solitary cause which can produce this particular phenomenon of life, the only reasonable inference we can draw from it is that His present existence is a fact.

That is to say, the consciousness of Christians, regarded as a phenomenon external to ourselves and represented by the language of this Epistle, seeing that its occurrence is dependent on the law therein defined, is not only the fullest evidence that Christians themselves can have of the reality of their Divine Master's life, but it does also constitute, as the writer's words appear to imply, an abiding witness to the non-Christian world, whether it is allowed and accepted or not, that the Jesus whom it confesses and adores, and from whom alone it claims to be derived, is after all not a dead and

powerless thought of the forgotten past,—a lifeless shadow flitting about among the disembodied shades of the departed great, who survive only in the fragrance of the ideas they have left behind them, but a living, powerful, and energetic verity, a personal force and influence, an animated Person, who is, from age to age, asserting and reasserting His own existence by the creation of individual believers whom He raises up, and the continuation of the vast body of the faithful whom He preserves unfailingly to bear the life and light and power of His name before the unbelieving but rebuked conscience of mankind.

And thus "He that believeth on the Son of God" not only "hath the witness in himself" for the confirmation of his own faith and a testimony to the truth of Him in whom he hath believed, but also hath a witness in himself and is himself a witness to the reality of that Divine Life from whence he draws his life; while he that believeth not God, thus witnessing to Himself and the power of His own will, hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record or witness which God hath thus witnessed of His Son; "And this is the record," or witness, "that God hath given" to those who know and believe in Him "eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

# LECTURE V

## THE UNITY OF ST. JOHN'S WRITINGS

REV. ii. 17.

*"He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."*

THUS far we have seen that, supposing St. John to have been the author of the first Epistle which bears his name, there is no doubt whatever that he appealed to the inward witness of Christians, as a fact obvious to themselves, which was practically sufficient for their need, which was directly calculated to prevent the possibility of their defection from Christ, and which, regarded as an actual phenomenon, was in fact of the nature of a witness also to others, to those even who rejected it, inasmuch as the conditions under which it was realised were uniform and unvarying.

Those only pretend to have the inward witness to Christ who believe in Him as the Son of God. Some, indeed, profess to believe in Him who have

it not, but to them, as well as to others, this writer's words are a standing protest against the inadequacy of their belief as long as there remain any persons who have found them true. For the inward evidence which accompanies belief in Christ is phenomenally distinct from that which results from any other persuasion whatever. So powerful, indeed, and so fascinating is the influence of truth upon the mind, that it is a joy at all times to think we have found it, and the conviction of having done so may not seldom pass for a confirmation of the thought, even though the supposed truth be falsehood. But the inward witness to Christ is something more than a joy like this; and when a man is able to say, "To me Christ is a living reality, and I am conscious of a life by faith in Him which once I had not, and which but for Him I should not now have," there are but two ways of meeting his assertion, if it find no response in ourselves: Either we may say, "I do not believe you; the consciousness of which you speak is a delusion of your own;" or we may say, "I can only wish that your experience were mine," but we cannot in fairness turn round upon him and say, "Your statement is not true;" for, even though in particular instances this might be the case, there are many others in which it could not possibly be so; and, in fact, the mere existence of Christian literature, and of this Epistle, for example, is an evidence to the contrary. Christ has

not *now* left Himself without a witness in the world, and the life of every Christian which is consciously derived from Him is of the nature of such a witness. That consciousness may not be ours, but we are bound to respect it as a substantive existence, a fact, in itself; and, being so, it is a fact that testifies to Christ.

It is nothing, therefore, to the point to depreciate the value of the inward witness on the ground that it is not of the nature of external evidence, *which is obviously true*, because, until it can be shown that "he that believeth on the Son of God hath" *not* "the witness in himself," every individual Christian who has been taught to find in his own experience an answer to the words in question is an independent witness to their truth. The very words themselves, whoever wrote them, are a witness to Christ, and every one who has found them true is an additional and independent witness to their truth.

Thus far, then, we have proceeded in presumed ignorance of the writer of this Epistle, or whether the author of it was likewise the author of the fourth Gospel. We have endeavoured to disengage altogether the value of his statements from any considerations for the particular person who may have made them. There can be no doubt that they have an independent value of their own which must be measured by the degree of acceptance they may be able to command. And this

acceptance can only be regarded as complete where the credit attaching to them is on account of their substantive intrinsic message, and not from any adventitious respect for their author. Unless they have made us disciples of Jesus instead of St. John, they have failed in the very purpose for which they were written, and no one would have been more ready to admit this than St. John himself, had he been their author.

While, however, it is very needful in the present day to insist upon the independent value of the Johannine writings to whomsoever they are to be referred, in order to show that we cannot escape from the responsibility of deciding upon their message with the excuse that we believe they were not written by St. John, it may be nevertheless expedient to dwell upon certain marked characteristics which are common to all these writings ; because, if the broad features of family likeness are discoverable in all, it may partly help us to determine the previous question of authorship. This, however, is an inquiry which cannot properly be conducted in a lecture of this kind,[1] nor does it relate to a matter in which we can hope to persuade those who are not already more or less convinced, appealing as it does to faculties of taste and judgment which must vary with the individual ; we must therefore be content to deal with it in a general way, and be thankful

[1] See Appendix, Note C.

if we can succeed in showing that, after all, the received opinion may possibly not be wrong.

Now, it has been admitted by recent critical authorities of some weight that the Revelation of St. John was certainly the work of the Apostle, while for that very reason it has been affirmed that the Gospel and Epistles were not by him. If, then, the Revelation is conceded to us as the undoubted work of the beloved Apostle, we have manifestly some solid and common ground to stand upon. We have in our possession at least one work which is certainly the production of St. John. If, then, it can be shown that, in spite of many apparent differences of an obvious character, there are still likenesses of a deeper and more inherent kind in the several works, and that these are also more intrinsically characteristic of unity of mind than the differences are of diversity, we may, perhaps, not unreasonably suffer ourselves to be guided to the inference that all the writings proceeded from one and the same author.

And, perhaps, the safest position that can be taken up in dealing with this subject is that which would assign to the first Epistle of St. John an intermediate place between the Revelation and the fourth Gospel. It is, perhaps, nearer in time, and less different in character than the Gospel. There are at least certain features in the Revelation which are supposed to be absent from the fourth Gospel, which are plainly to be distin-

guished in the first Epistle. In the Revelation, for instance, there is much of vindictiveness and the execution of judicial wrath. There is but one passage in the fourth Gospel where the phrase "the wrath of God"[2] is found; neither, indeed, does it actually occur in the first Epistle, but a very broad line of demarcation is there drawn between those who are of God and those who are of the world—between those who confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh and those who do not—between those who believe the record of God and those who make him a liar.

And the mere fact of this broad line being very definitely drawn shows us at least that the writer of the first Epistle could have contemplated, without that revulsion of feeling which some of our critics affect, the terrible delineations of judgment which characterise the Revelation. That is to say, so far as mere sentiment is concerned, it is conceivable that the man who wrote the first Epistle could also have written the Revelation. For the germ of that judgment, the execution of which is depicted in the one, is discoverable likewise in the other. And when the writer of the Epistle, who discerned so clearly the distinction between the evil and the good, speaks of the love of the faithful being made perfect, that *they*[3] may have boldness in the day of judgment, as if the righteous even should scarcely be saved, we cannot

[2] St. John iii. 36. [3] St. John iv. 17.

but feel that he has virtually adopted the very principle which is embodied in the eschatological visions of the Revelation. However full, therefore, he may be of love, and however strongly he may inculcate the duty of it; nay, more, however firmly he may be possessed with the conviction that Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, he is not by any means blinded thereby to the fact that separation must be made between the righteous and the wicked, and that in the day of judgment, when it shall be made, those only can have "boldness" who have known and believed the love that God hath to them.

Let us turn, then, with the light of this fact, to the contemplation of the fourth Gospel. As we have seen, "the wrath of God" is expressly mentioned only once in it, and that by John the Baptist. It is open, therefore, to conjecture that, supposing the writer to have recorded accurately the Baptist's language, he may not himself have sympathised with the sentiment of it; though, on the other hand, supposing him to have put these words into the Baptist's mouth, there is the less likelihood that he did not agree with them; in which case, the mere occurrence once of such a phrase as "the wrath of God," however we may explain it, is quite sufficient to show that it was a conception which was not foreign to the author's mind, and *so far* the observations we have made

with reference to the first Epistle apply likewise to the fourth Gospel, whereas the simple fact that a phrase like this, which is absent from the Epistle, is actually found in the Gospel, tends the rather to confirm them.

But, in point of fact, we are not limited in dealing with the fourth Gospel to the solitary occurrence of a single phrase. On the contrary, that which we may call the principle of discrimination which was manifest in the Epistle is not only prevalent but pervading throughout the whole of the Gospel. The whole spirit of it is a spirit of the most searching discrimination. Our Lord declares the very purpose of His mission, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind."[4] If this discrimination is a fact and not a sentiment, it is impossible but that it must issue in something like the open proclamation and exhibition of judgment which we perceive in the Apocalypse. Indeed it were easy to show, were this the place to do so, not only that the same thing must issue in *future* judgment, but that it does actually issue in it now, so that if the fourth Evangelist did not recognise this discrimination as a fact he would be most conspicuously opposed to not a few of the realities of suffering life as they are known to exist. This, however, would oblige us to digress too widely.

[4] St. John ix. 39.

But, on the other hand, if we can reconcile ourselves to the use of a word so dreadful and so inapplicable to Holy Writ as *vindictive*, it is certain that there is not any part to which it would apply so well as to the fourth Gospel. For, premising that vindictiveness is a term altogether inappropriate when applied to the wrath of God against sin, and that there is nothing but sin which can be the subject of His wrath, there is, we may safely affirm, no one book of Scripture, not even the Apocalypse itself, which so marvellously reveals the character of God's relation to sin as this particular Gospel. It draws the distinction sharper than any other book between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, belief and unbelief, life and death. There is a great gulf fixed between them, and the elevation at which we are placed is so high as to prevent the alien shores from being dimly clouded by the distance or blended confusedly from the disadvantages of our position. The character of Jesus as portrayed in it stands out in perfect and sublime isolation from the midst of the hatred and depravity which everywhere surrounds Him. Sin has absolutely no power of cohesion with Him, it does not come into contact with the Divine purity of His mind. It passes off from His hallowed soul like the stream of mercury poured on a surface of shining crystal or an even slab of polished alabaster. It cannot touch so as

to defile or stain His unsullied nature, it cannot enter so as to rest in Him. But this it is that serves to manifest the inherent antagonism of its own character—its irreconcilable antipathy to Him. It likewise stands out in all its hideous deformity in clear and defined contrast to the holiness of His Person. And this is seen not more in the enemies who resist Him than it is in the teaching which He delivers. From first to last that teaching expresses a consciousness of evil as a principle with which He is engaged in deadly conflict—as an element which can never amalgamate with Him so long as its nature remains unchanged. "Ye are from beneath, I am from above. Ye are of this world, I am not of this world."[5] "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth; when he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it."[6] Here at least is the consciousness of hatred against Him if it be not hatred that is returned with hate. "Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me."[7] "I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."[8] Here

[5] St. John viii. 23.
[6] St. John viii. 44.
[7] St. John xiv. 30.
[8] St. John xvii. 14, 15.

the existence is declared of a principle of evil which is not only opposed to Him, but which He foresees will continue to be opposed to those who believe in Him. And it is a slight but remarkable and significant illustration of this fact that the word *to hate* is used more frequently in the fourth Gospel than in any other, and as often in the writings attributed to St. John as in all the rest of the New Testament put together. It is in fact used more frequently in this Gospel than in any other book of the New Testament, and, strange to say, by no one but by our Lord Himself. Now, whatever may be the value of this circumstance, it is at least a proof that the idea of hatred was not foreign to the mind of the Evangelist, and that he did not regard it as inconsistent with his conception of his Master's character to represent Him as using language which showed at least a keen susceptibility to the world's hatred of Himself, and therefore a keen perception of the antipathy of evil and of the judgment which was due to it. If therefore we choose to say that judgment and vengeance are marked features of the Revelation, we cannot say that they find no place in the fourth Gospel, or that because they do the same author could not have written both.

Again, the actual word Antichrist is not found in the Revelation, but it is obvious that the conception is one which is very highly developed in that book. In the Epistles of St. John, however,

we have the word frequently, but nowhere else in the New Testament. And yet in the fourth Gospel is it not clear that the *principle* of Antichrist is everywhere conspicuous? Christ is thus, as we have seen, in direct antagonism with "the prince of this world," and the disciples whom he leaves behind may expect to be. If the Apocalypse is the work of St. John there is no question about the early development of the *idea*, and by the time the first Epistle was written it had become so prevalent that the word also was in vogue; but is it not somewhat strange that, in a work supposed to be later than either, the *germ* of the idea should be so conspicuous? the actual Antichrist so plainly drawn, and yet drawn in such a way as can scarcely have been consistent with the fuller development of the idea as expressed already by a previous writer, in the Revelation? Supposing *this* to be veritably the work of St. John, and the Gospel to have been written some seventy or eighty years later, we cannot imagine such a resolution of the concrete notion of Antichrist into its primary component elements as the Gospel presents to us, that notion having previously been expressed as it is in the first Epistle. To imagine this would be to ascribe to the writer of it a power of philosophical analysis such as, to say the least, it is highly improbable he can have possessed. Supposing the discourses of Jesus, as the fourth Evangelist

records them, to have exhibited that marked antagonism to a root principle of evil which they show, we can easily understand the idea developing till it assumed the character of Antichrist which the Revelation depicts and till the word itself was generated which is found in the Epistles of St. John. But the reverse process is one which is contrary to the natural growth of ideas, and for that reason is not likely to have occurred. Unity of authorship, therefore, in the writings attributed to St. John is not improbable *so far*, judging merely from the phenomena which they present.

There are, however, other points in which the first Epistle seems to occupy a mid position between the Gospel and the Revelation, or in which at least we can trace a similarity of thought that is too slight to have been intentional, and yet too remarkable an indication of unity of sentiment, if not of mind, to be overlooked. For example, we meet with these words, "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin."[9] Now we need not dwell upon the similarity between the first clause and the words in the Gospel, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,"[1] because being so obvious it might be designed. One is, in fact, the echo of the other, and both are almost identical in substance, if not in form, with the

[9] St. John iii. 5.

[1] St. John i. 29.

ascription of glory in the Apocalypse, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood."[2] But we will take the second clause, "in him is no sin," which is perhaps the only direct statement of the sinlessness of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. St. Paul does indeed say, "He hath made him to be sin for us who *knew no sin;*"[3] but besides the fact that here the same truth is stated indirectly, no one could for a moment suppose that the statement in the one Epistle was borrowed from the other or suggested anything with respect to authorship. It is, moreover, not necessary to show that the same idea of the sinlessness of Jesus virtually underlies the whole of the Revelation. His equality with God the Father is so plainly taught there that His sinlessness must be supposed to follow as a matter of course. But let us turn to the fourth Gospel, and search for what we may find there. Of course, so far as the Sonship of Jesus is taught in that Gospel, His sinlessness must follow likewise by implication; and the same may be said, perhaps, of His Messiahship. But it is something more explicit than this that we want, something, for instance, which, if really said by Christ, might have sunk into the mind of His disciple, and eventually produced the statement which is here made. Our Lord, then, openly confronted by His enemies, challenges

[2] Rev. i. 5. [3] 2 Cor. v. 21.

them in these words, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"[4] Now, it is impossible to overestimate the significance of this question when we bear in mind that just before He had said, "I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of myself, but he sent me."[5] It can mean nothing less than an assertion of His own absolute sinlessness. And the same thing is taught us many times over, for example, when He says, "He that sent me is with me, the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him;"[6] and again, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin, and the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever,"[7] and therefore doth not commit sin. But more than all, we may surely find the exact prototype of the statement of the first Epistle in other words of Jesus in the Gospel, "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory, but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, *and no unrighteousness is in him.*"[8] Now, seeing that He is here vindicating Himself, there can be no doubt that His words, though cast in the form of a general statement, are virtually equivalent to an assertion of His own personal freedom from unrighteousness or sin. It is certain, therefore, that, whatever may be our estimate of this coin-

[4] St. John viii. 46. [5] St. John viii. 42. [6] St. John viii. 29.
[7] St. John viii. 34, 35. [8] St. John vii. 18.

cidence, and of its actual bearing on the question of authorship, it does show a unity of sentiment and teaching such as might well characterise productions of the same mind, but such as we should hardly expect to find as the result of design in any work which was consciously moulded on the pattern of some other. Or, at least, we may say this, that, supposing the words in the Gospel to have been actually spoken by our Lord, we do see a very striking reason in the Gospel for the somewhat bold and novel assertion made in the Epistle. The writer was not then speaking on his own authority, but was making an original statement based on the recollection of what he had heard our Lord say.

Once more, assuming the Revelation to be the work of St. John, we must by no means infer that the prevailing character of that book was an adequate representation of the prevailing character of his mind. On the contrary, we cannot shut our eyes to the evidence afforded by the book itself, which purports to be the record of a special revelation or series of visions combining to constitute a revelation which was once given him for a special purpose, and under special circumstances, in the island of Patmos. Unless, therefore, there is evidence that he was in the habit of receiving revelations such as this, and of having visions such as those which are here recorded, we have every reason to suppose that the phenomena of

this book must be altogether exceptional, not only to the prevailing character of Christian literature, but likewise to the prevailing character of the writer's own mind. And so it is, for there is not the slightest evidence of the kind. Even if this book were the unique production of the Apostle John, it would still bear on the face of it the tokens of a revelation altogether exceptional. The mere existence, therefore, of this book affords no evidence that the author did not write others, or that, if written, they would not be different in style and character from this. On the contrary, the analogy of the books of the Old Testament rather tends to show that they would. The visionary parts of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah are in style and character very different from the rest ; and if any doubt attaches to the integrity of Daniel or Zechariah, the same doubt does not attach to Ezekiel,[9] nor indeed to the first part of Zechariah, and yet the remark holds good. We have every reason, therefore, to infer that a considerable difference in style would be discernible between such a book as the Revelation and any other works which the author may have written. That this difference is very great is no valid argument against unity of authorship in the fourth Gospel, the so-called first Epistle of St. John, and the Revelation.

[9] Only a few rash critics, and these of little name or mark, have disputed the integrity of Ezekiel in chaps. xl.–xlviii.

On the other hand, if, beneath the superficial differences of style we can really discern a substantive identity of thought, the existence of this, notwithstanding the obvious differences which may be specially accounted for, would constitute a positive evidence in favour of a single author. For example, the doctrine of judgment according to works is a prominent doctrine of the Revelation. We find, however, manifest traces of this same doctrine in the traditional Epistles of St. John. For, if otherwise, what is the meaning of such statements as these: "Hereby we do know that we know him if we keep his commandments."[1] "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."[2] "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."[3] "He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him and he in him."[4] "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."[5] "This is love, that we walk after his commandments."[6] "He that doeth good is of God, but he that doeth evil hath not seen God."[7] "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him; herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment."[8] There is no question but that the

[1] St. John ii. 3. [2] St. John ii. 17. [3] St. John iii. 7.
[4] St. John iii. 24. [5] St. John v. 3. [6] 2 St. John 6.
[7] 3 St. John 11. [8] 1 St. John iv. 16, 17.

writer of these passages laid great stress upon the necessity of good works; that he looked forward to the judgment-day as that which would alone reveal the relation of good works to union with Christ—that they contained in themselves the germ of that which would be manifested at the judgment-day. But if this be so, neither can there be any doubt but that the same writer, as far as the enunciation of doctrine is concerned, could have spoken also of the dead being judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works, and have represented Jesus as saying, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be,"[9] as well as given utterance to many similar statements which are found in the Apocalypse. But are these statements in the Epistles of St. John so very different after all from many which occur in the fourth Gospel? Is there not rather a marked similarity, not to say identity, among them? What, for instance, is the bearing upon this matter of the famous words, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their *deeds* were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made

[9] Rev. xxii. 12.

manifest that they are wrought in God."[1] Or again, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."[2] "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings;"[3] and the like. Or, to take another passage, which is stronger than all, "The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."[4] One and all of these passages, which are the words of our Lord Himself, recognise the doctrine of judgment according to works no less strongly than that doctrine is recognised in the Revelation. As far, then, as this point is concerned, one writer might have written all, for there is a unity of sentiment and teaching common to all.

A careful consideration of the fourth Gospel and the first Epistle of St. John can scarcely lead an unbiassed student to any other conviction than that they were both the work of one and the same writer, whoever he may have been. There is substantially the same teaching, the same language, the same characteristic thought in each. And to say this is not to deny that there are also distinguishing differences between them. There must of necessity be such differences between any

[1] St. John iii. 19-21.
[2] St. John xiv. 15.
[3] St. John xiv. 24.
[4] St. John v. 28, 29.

two separate works of the same mind. There may be great similarity, but there must be a certain difference. And this is really the case with the two works before us. But in addition to this, there are also certain features in the first Epistle which approximate considerably to the thought and teaching of the Revelation. If, then, it is admitted that the Revelation was written by St. John, it is plain that, as far as internal evidence is concerned, this fact is to a certain extent in favour of the supposition that the first Epistle was also his work.

And let it not be said that the facts adduced are of trifling import, for we have purposely confined ourselves now to the exclusive consideration of the internal evidence on the subject, and in all such questions the facts adduced can hardly be other than slight; if in this case they were of overwhelming force the question would not admit of debate. The value of the points we have adduced must of necessity depend very greatly upon the character and bias of the mind which estimates them. All that can be required of us is that we do not lay undue weight upon them, and this it is which we are most anxious to avoid. They are only advanced as having significance up to a certain point and in connection with other facts.

In this way, then, let me direct your attention to a trifling circumstance which may serve to show an approximation in sentiment between the

Revelation and the fourth Gospel. The latter chapters of the Revelation are occupied with a vision of the Bride of the Lamb of God. The reference to her is a marked feature of the Apocalypse. But surely it is not unworthy of observation that it is only the fourth Evangelist who has recorded the circumstance, or the fact, of our Lord's presence at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, and still more that it is he only to whom we are indebted for the striking words of John the Baptist in which the like figure is used of Christ, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled."[5] The similarity of thought to the mystical language of the Apocalypse is greater here than it is anywhere else in the New Testament. For, though our Lord in the synoptical Gospels does speak of the kingdom of heaven being like to the marriage of the king's son, and St. Paul does speak of the Church as the spouse of Christ, yet the likeness there in either case is not such as would for a moment suggest identity of authorship among the several books.[6] And yet

[5] St. John iii. 29.

[6] We have also in the synoptists, "Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast."—St. Matt. ix. 15. St. Mark ii. 19. St. Luke v. 34. But the same remark applies.

we must bear in mind that the likeness to the Revelation now spoken of in the fourth Gospel is quite independent of veracity on the part of the author, and of the accuracy with which he may or may not have reported the words of John the Baptist. The fact is one which concerns him merely as an *author*, and in this respect there can be no question but that a similarity of thought is discernible between the Apocalypse and the Gospel, and yet a similarity which from the nature of the case cannot have been designed.

And it is likenesses of this kind, far more than mere similarity of language, which indicate identity of authorship. There is a manifest similarity of incident and character in the several productions of the author of "Waverley"—a strong family likeness of this kind runs through both the poems and the novels. The unity is one of thought, sentiment, and feeling, far more than of language or even of style. And that style alone is not a sufficient guide to authorship is shown by the success with which for years the author of "Waverley" maintained his *incognito*. And yet it may be safely said that the similarity between "Redgauntlet" and "Marmion" is not greater than that between the fourth Gospel and the Revelation. Neither are the sonnets of Shakespeare more unlike Macbeth than is the first Epistle of St. John unlike the Apocalypse.

But we come now to unity of esoteric teaching

in the several writings ascribed to St. John. It is said that the carnal views of Christ's Messiahship which are attributed to the sons of Zebedee by the synoptical Evangelists characterise the teaching of the Revelation, while more catholic and spiritualised ideas predominate in the fourth Gospel. Now it cannot be denied that in both the Gospel and the Apocalypse Jesus is represented as the Christ—that in both He is represented as the Son of God, equal with the Father, being set down with the Father on His throne[7]—as the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty[8]—that before Him the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him as living for ever and ever[9]—that, in short, the highest possible Divine honours are from first to last ascribed to Him. In this respect, then, the adoration paid to Jesus in the Apocalypse is worthy of that writer who either recorded the Lord's words or represented Him as saying, "That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."[1] The only point open to question is whether the view of the Messiahship is or is not essentially different in the two books. Now, in order to ascertain the true answer to this question, we

[7] Rev. iii. 21.
[8] Rev. i. 8.
[9] Rev. iv. 10.
[1] St. John v. 23.

must bear in mind that, while a limit is expressly assigned to the number of the children of Israel that were sealed to be delivered from the judgments of God upon the earth, the writer distinctly says, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, *which no man could number*, of *all* nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."[2] If such, then, is the writer's own estimate of the relative proportion of Jews and Gentiles who are to ascribe salvation to God and the Lamb, where is the justice of the charge which is brought against him of Judaic prejudice and exclusiveness? Or how can he be chargeable with carnal notions of Christ's Messiahship who represents the dissolution of the material heavens and earth as an indispensable pre-requisite for the complete exercise of that Messiahship? While with reference to the chiliasm which is thought by some to be so marked a feature of the Apocalypse, it is a fact that, whatever may be the right interpretation of the thousand years, the mention of them is confined to one solitary passage, and therefore chiliasm can not with more show of justice be selected as *the* characteristic feature of the Revelation than the Epistles to the seven

[2] Rev. vii. 9, 10; cf. v. 9.

churches, nor, in fact, with nearly so much. Nor, again, is it anywhere said that the saints were to live and reign with Christ a thousand years *upon the earth*.[3] And this, I apprehend, was the prevailing idea of chiliasm. It may be out of place, but one can scarcely forbear to add, that on the supposition of the Apocalypse being really the work of John the beloved Apostle of Jesus, and on the supposition which must surely follow, that it was a revelation *which God gave him*, we are well-nigh precluded from dealing with the writer's alleged chiliasm as a peculiar characteristic of his own mind, because, so far as it was a part of the special revelation which God gave him, the Giver rather than the recipient must be held responsible for it. Least of all must the absence or omission of any trace of chiliasm from the fourth Gospel be held adequate to prove that it also was not the production of St. John, because, as we have seen, there is but one passage in the Apocalypse itself in which there is any reference to chiliasm, and that passage of the nature of an episode.

There are but three books in the New Testament, if we except a somewhat uncertain passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the appellation of "the Word of God" is ascribed to Jesus. The use of this term, however, in the Epistle to the Hebrews[4] is different in kind from that which is met with in these books. And,

[3] Cf. Rev. v. 10; xxii. 5.

[4] Heb. iv. 12.

though the employment of it cannot alone be held conclusive with respect to authorship, yet we must allow that the use of a phrase so rare is sufficient to characterise the writings in which it is found as belonging to a particular class. Now these three books are the fourth Gospel, the first Epistle of St. John, and the Revelation. In point of fact the use of this phrase is confined to a single passage in each. It is found four times in the Gospel, once in the Epistle, and once in the Revelation. But in the Revelation there is also found, if we may so say, a resolution or analysis of the phrase into its original idea. For instance, in the opening vision of Jesus, it is said that "out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword,"[5] which can only refer to Him in His capacity as the Word of God who is to judge all the kindreds of the earth. And again, in the nineteenth chapter, with obvious reference to the name of "The Word of God," which is there assigned to Him, it is said, "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword that with it he should smite the nations."[6] Now, these circumstances taken together may surely be allowed, to show that, judging on internal grounds *alone*, there are not wanting certain indications which may warrant us in assigning the Revelation to the same class of Logos-writings to which the fourth Gospel and the first Epistle of St. John unquestionably

[5] Rev. i. 16. [6] Rev. xix. 13, 15.

belong. Whether or not we include the Epistle to the Hebrews in this class is another matter which need not influence our decision about the authorship of these three books. Certain it is that a feature, which is admitted to be one of the most marked characteristics of the fourth Gospel and the first Epistle of St. John, is to be found also with considerable prominence in the Revelation, and, excepting the Epistle to the Hebrews, nowhere else.

It was observed also, in a former lecture, that it was characteristic of the fourth Evangelist to identify Jesus with an unseen but ever present Person who searches the hearts and reins. And, as an indication that this idea was not foreign to the writer of the Apocalypse, we may observe that each of the Epistles to the seven churches, which are sent expressly in the name of Jesus, commences with the striking formula, "I know thy works." Now, it is not pretended that phenomena such as these are other than slight, but because they are slight they are not imaginary, and the common features which mark a unity of authorship in works so different in form and object, as the Revelation and the fourth Gospel, must of necessity be slight. It is the union of many fibres which makes the strength of the stoutest cable.

But, lastly, there remains another and a very important feature which is alike discernible

throughout the supposed writings of St. John. We have seen already what stress the writer of the first Epistle lays upon the inward witness. This witness, although mentioned exclusively in the first Epistle, is not less conspicuous in the fourth Gospel. The professed motive which the author of that Gospel had in writing "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name,"[7] contains virtually the same principle, and enunciates the same truth that is stated in the first Epistle. For there the inward witness is declared to be the conscious possession of eternal life through belief in Jesus. The position which the two writers contemplate is precisely identical, and their language is almost identical. Indeed, there are probably but few persons who can bring themselves to believe that the two writers are not one. The principle of esoteric conviction, as the seal of the Spirit of God to the truth of Jesus Christ in the heart of the believer, is insisted upon so strongly, both in the Gospel and Epistle, as to constitute a most conspicuous feature of resemblance—an undoubted evidence of identity of teaching. Nor only so; for, though the same principle is by no means unknown to other writers in the New Testament, yet there is no single writer who dwells upon it in the same way, or to the same extent, as the author of this Gospel and

[7] St. John xx. 31.

Epistle. Let me ask you, therefore, whether, in the words which we read in the letter to the angel of the Church in Pergamos, there is not a nearer approximation to this principle of esoteric conviction than is to be found in any other writer of the New Testament? "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the *hidden manna*, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, *which no man knoweth saving he which receiveth it*." What is this but the same principle of the inward witness in its highest possible development? The hidden manna, whatever else it may be, can only be manna of which the world knows nothing, which it can neither discover nor appreciate. He only who would appeal to the inward witness would make mention of the hidden manna as the reward of victory, for the conception is one and the same, and points us unmistakeably to one mind conceiving it.

Nor is it otherwise with these other words, the "new name which no man knoweth saving he which receiveth it." We can hardly imagine a more manifest token of similarity, not to say identity of thought in two writers than this. And it is the kind of identity which is beyond the reach of conscious or designed imitation. Moreover, the writer who ascribes to believers an esoteric witness of this kind is fully consistent

with himself when he represents Him in whom they have believed as possessing the like mysterious characteristic. Jesus Christ, who, by His Spirit, bestows this witness on His disciples, is Himself called the faithful and true witness. He Himself is the source and fountain of their testimony. Because He is faithful and true, their confidence in Him is not misplaced. He who is faithful confirms their faith, and the witness by which it is confirmed is the pattern and reflex of His own incommunicable prerogatives; for He who was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, in token of His own faithfulness even unto death, and whose name is called the Word of God—the God that cannot lie—had likewise "a name written that no man knew but He Himself."[8]

Now, surely we may point with confidence to indications such as these, which, taken together, afford undeniable evidence of a marked similarity in tone, and thought, and teaching between writers who at first sight may strike us as being so divergent as the authors of the fourth Gospel, the first Epistle, and the Revelation. We do not profess to have proved their identity, for this you cannot do. If you did not know it, you could not prove identity of authorship in "Eikonoklastes" and "Paradise Regained." These are questions which depend very much upon individual imagination. But, perhaps, there are those who may think that,

[8] Rev. xix. 12.

after all, the best solution of this problem is that which has been given by the uniform tradition of the early Church, and that there are internal features of a remarkable kind in these several Johannine books which make it not improbable that he, who "was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ,"[9] was he who wrote, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and these things write we unto you that your joy may be full;"[1] that it was even he also who said in the fourth Gospel, "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true."[2]

[9] Rev. i. 9. [1] 1 St. John i. 34. [2] St. John xxi. 24.

# LECTURE VI

## THE AUTHORITY OF ST. JOHN'S WRITINGS

ST. JOHN xii. 46, 47, 48

"*I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*"

THE object of our last lecture was to show from the internal evidence of the so-called Johannine writings that there was reason why we should not think it so incredible as some would have us believe, that they had all proceeded from one author, and that author St. John. We have chosen to deal only with the internal evidence because all evidence of another kind will be better dealt with elsewhere, and because, as it seems to us, the strongest positive arguments against the authenticity of St. John's Gospel are those which are derived from the internal evidence. The arguments which are based upon the silence of

contemporary or almost contemporary writers are of less weight and merely of a negative kind; for it is obvious that a work might have been in existence for a long time, and yet from a variety of probable causes not be mentioned by other writers till after the lapse of many years, and more particularly is this the case in a society constituted as the Christian Church was during the first two centuries after Christ. It is a weak argument, for example, to infer that because Justin Martyr does not mention St. John's Gospel by name he was certainly ignorant of it, and more especially so when his own language is almost a verbal repetition of that Gospel, and expresses thoughts which are not found elsewhere in the New Testament.[1] This argument from a writer's silence or omission is of all arguments the most unsatisfactory, and at the best it is only negative, whereas an argument drawn from a writer's style so far as it goes is of positive value.

We have seen, then, that in the several Johannine writings, different as we may allow them to be, there are nevertheless some remarkable common elements, and that these elements exhibit similarity of thought and not merely a verbal or linguistic similarity. They are like children of the same parent, oftentimes very unlike in feature and in form, but yet possessing a family likeness of expression which is very per-

[1] See Appendix, Note A. v.

ceptible but not easy to be defined. It is of the very nature of this likeness that it is not visible at all times or to all persons. It is only some particular incident, or attitude, or condition of mind, that calls it out, but under given circumstances it exists and becomes apparent, and then it must be referred to identity of origin or parentage and not to chance, to the fact of consanguinity rather than to fancy. Certain it is that among members of the same family we can frequently discern no other likeness than this; they are different in character, different in complexion, different in manner, different in station and in age, but in spite of all there is still the indescribable blood resemblance. This is a physical phenomenon that we daily recognise; but it is not equally recognisable in the productions of the mind? Many of the greatest names in literature have confessedly produced works that are unworthy of their genius, and if the fact of authorship could not be established upon other grounds it certainly could not upon those of style or merit. It is obvious, therefore, that in cases where this fact is called in question, the evidence of style or manner alone must not be trusted without great caution. It is hazardous to say that such a work cannot be by a particular writer because it is unlike his other works. And though it is equally hazardous to affirm that because of certain supposed likenesses two or more works are by the

same author, yet we may safely say that the existence of such likenesses, confirmed as they are in this case by the testimony of tradition, does constitute a valid reason why we should hesitate to believe the contrary, if there is no better reason for believing it.

Now, the value of these reasons must be discussed elsewhere ;[2] for the present we may content ourselves with inquiring into the authority of the Johannine writings, not, indeed, assuming them to be St. John's, but seeking rather to estimate with justice the nature of that authority whether they are his or not. And, in the first place, it may be remarked that they are entitled to a very considerable degree of authority from being, as they doubtless are, the production of a very early period of the Church, even if not really of Apostolic origin. No one thinks of denying to the first Epistle of Clemens Romanus a certain amount of interest and of value merely because he was not an Apostle. We claim nothing for the so-called Johannine writings but what cannot be denied to them on the lowest possible ground. Taking them as we find them, they are, at all events, a record of the mind of a large portion of the Christian Church at a very early period of its history, and their very general, not to say universal, acceptance towards the end of the second century shows that they accurately expressed the prevalent

[2] See Appendix, Note C.

belief and thought of the Church at that time. The whole body of believers, with a very few unimportant exceptions, were content to be taught by them. They received them as authoritative whether or not they were authentic.

Now the question is, What is the value of this acceptance? How far are we right to take it as a guide for ourselves? And the answer to these questions must depend upon two considerations. First, upon the probability there is of the faith of the Church being pure and correct in proportion to its primitive antiquity; and, secondly, upon the degree in which our own opinions are in accordance with those of the early Church as thus expressed. If we are prepared to believe that the purity of the stream is in proportion to its nearness to the fountain head, and that Christian doctrine was never so simple and uncontaminated as in its very earliest forms, then we cannot but regard the Johannine writings, even though they be not St. John's, as documents of the highest possible value, and as possessed of a proportionate authority. If again our sentiments are in unison with the teaching which they unquestionably inculcate, then whether or not they are of Apostolic origin we shall thankfully accept them as furnishing undoubted evidence that at a period of little more than a century after the death of Christ the same belief was held by the very large majority of Christian men. That as we ourselves

accept Jesus of Nazareth for the Incarnate Word now, so at least He was accepted at the time when these writings first appeared, and in all probability for some considerable time before. If, on the other hand, we are disposed to think that the early Church was not better off than we ourselves are with regard to matters of belief—that their creed, however accurately it may be determined, is of no authority for us—that as they were clearly wrong upon certain points, such, for instance, as the millennium and the approaching consummation of all things, so they may have been upon many others, such, for instance, as those which are taught by the writings of St. John—then most undoubtedly we shall be willing to depreciate the value of those writings, to repudiate them as authoritative and not improbably to impugn the credentials with which they come to us, and to insist upon the invalidity thereof as a reason for rejecting their authority. We may not, indeed, suffer our judgment consciously to be biassed by such considerations, but, as a matter of fact, our disbelief in the Johannine authorship of these writings and our rejection of their authority will go hand in hand together. It is not common to find a man thoroughly imbued with Johannine teaching, and morally convinced of its abstract and absolute truth who at the same time disbelieves it to have been strictly speaking apostolic. Thus the condition of our own belief

in Christ will not improbably, as a matter of fact, be a correct index of the opinion we have formed upon this question of authorship.

Let it be granted, then, in a spirit of the most entire concession that this is a purely critical question to be decided upon purely critical grounds, and upon no others; and let it further be assumed, though it is not granted, that the balance of evidence is in favour of a non-Apostolic origin for the Johannine writings, then the point we are most anxious to insist upon is this, that the question is not closed there, but much rather an entirely separate and independent question is raised; namely, the abstract truth or error of the doctrine taught by these writings. Now it is of course admitted that we cannot appeal to certain writings whose authority we have surrendered in support of the teaching they inculcate—that were indeed to reason in a circle—but forasmuch as the teaching in this case is of a piece with and not opposed to the prevalent teaching of the early Church, forasmuch as it is substantially identical with the teaching of St. Paul's known Epistles—since those Epistles contain a view of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus, which to all intents and purposes is identical with and is certainly not surpassed by the view exhibited in these writings, since in both the same Lord Jesus is the one object of worship and the one source of grace, since in both He is represented as the Judge of the world

and the Son of God, since in both the gift of eternal life is distinctly asserted to have come through Him, and since in both the blood of redemption is set forth as the one hope of pardon —therefore we affirm that the right unquestionably is ours to estimate the character of the Johannine teaching solely on its own merits, to inquire into the witness of St. John to Christ apart altogether from the adventitious weight which his testimony would derive from the fact of its being undisputedly his.

If, for example, the message of the fourth Gospel were intrinsically different from that which it is evident that St. Paul had received and handed on, and from that which the Church generally had accepted and professed to believe—if the doctrine of the fourth Gospel led us to a position which was untenable and irreconcilable with our allegiance to other Christian documents of no less eminent repute—(I am not speaking now of the alleged discrepances in matters of fact recorded in the Gospel narrative, but of that body of Christian doctrine inculcated by St. Paul and St. John in common, which, whatever may be its differences, is, after all, one in substance and in heart)—if, in this sense, the message of the fourth Gospel were inconsistent, for example, to put the case strongly, with the message of the Epistle to the Galatians, then the right which we have claimed might indeed be challenged. But if this

be not so, if the ultimate result to which the teaching leads us is the same in both, if mere belief in Jesus may briefly be selected as the one central point where both converge—then we may boldly postpone the question of authorship in the Johannine writings, and endeavour to estimate the character of their teaching solely on its own merits.

And let it not be said that to pursue such a course as this is conspicuously uncritical for that it takes no note of the very points upon which it is the function of criticism specially to dwell, because it surely is the function of the critic to tell us the meaning and import of a particular document no less than to decide upon its date. If the function of the interpreter is to be merged in that of the critic, so that the critic is to be allowed to pronounce dogmatically upon works which he cannot understand, then plainly his office becomes one of diminished value : it is of small practical utility. The meaning of these writings is, we may well thank God, transparently clear ; it admits neither of ambiguity nor of dispute. The writer's professed object was to lead men to simple faith in Jesus. It surely cannot be denied that the writer of the Epistle to the Galatians had no other object set before him ; but if this be so, the object of the two writers was one and the same, and if this be so, the writer of the fourth Gospel aimed at identically the same object with St.

Paul, but he compassed his object in another way. The fourth Gospel, in fact, whatever else it was, most assuredly was this, another and a different method of accomplishing the same result—of bringing men to believe in Jesus. It is entirely gratuitous, and contrary to all evidence, to affirm that the object of the two writers was intrinsically diverse, however great we may well allow their superficial differences of style, or manner, or method to have been. It cannot fairly be alleged that the Person whom both proclaimed was not the same. The crucified and suffering Jesus, the risen and ascended Jesus, was the theme of both. The constraining love of Jesus was the ruling impulse in both. The central thought and truth was the same in both, however wide apart the position of the two might be on the circumference of expression. Indeed, we are not without the means of fairly estimating the significance of this divergence in two early Christian writers, by a comparison of the same divergence in the great Christian writers of our own land. It is scarcely possible to magnify the difference between Hooker and Bunyan, Pearson and Howe. They were writers not only different in style, but totally different, and even opposed in ecclesiastical predilections. Their conception of Christ was wholly different. But the difference between Hooker and Bunyan, or Pearson and Howe, is scarcely greater in either case than that between Hooker and Pearson, who

were both great luminaries of the same Church. Surely their conception of Christ was very different. Where do we find in Pearson anything approaching to that eloquent warmth of mystical devotion which is wrought up to a climax in the rapt and fervent meditation which concludes the discussion on the Eucharist in Hooker's fifth Book? The spark of seraphic fire which glows in Hooker is well-nigh extinguished in Pearson. There is scarcely a glimmer of it to be seen. And yet we cannot for a moment doubt, not only that both would have acknowledged the same Jesus to be the object of their common worship, but also that it was identically the same person in whom both believed, and about whom both intended to discourse. And the same may be said of Hooker and of Bunyan, or of Pearson and of Howe. But it may well be questioned whether the difference is as great between St. Paul and St. John—between the fourth Gospel and the Epistle to the Galatians—as it is between these several writers. Surely, therefore, parity of reasoning would lead us to admit that the divergence in style or sentiment is no warrant for believing that the Jesus of the fourth Gospel is intrinsically different from the Jesus of St. Paul. The Person and the character are one, though the way in which He is presented may be different. And philosophically we are not warranted, if we are critically, in assuming that this difference in style, manner, and

conception is any proof whatever of intrinsic difference in the object. The character of Jesus, like the form and features of His Person, is indelibly stamped upon the world's memory. Obliterate the Gospels, or prove them historically inaccurate, and you cannot obliterate the impression of this character from the memory or the imagination of mankind. It will still survive in ineffaceable distinctness, like the impression of a seal of which the die has irrecoverably been lost. Now, the Gospel of St. John, whatever else it is, is the writer's own interpretation of this impression. It is the record of his conception of Christ. It is his monograph upon this ancient seal, and it is the more valuable because it is almost as ancient as the seal itself. It is possessed of the very highest interest and value from the mere fact of its great antiquity.

And forasmuch as the matter of which it treats is permanently the same—for the impression produced upon the world by the character of Christ does not and cannot vary—it is a substantive result, independently of the world's belief in Him, as much as the impression produced by Socrates, or Cæsar, or Muhammad, is a substantive result—forasmuch as this result is permanent—we may take this writer's interpretation of the character of Jesus, his delineation of His person, and endeavour to estimate it on its own merits; only in this case—and here is the point—our estimate

must vary according to the degree in which our opinions coincide with his—according as we do or do not believe in that which it is his professed object to teach. The authority, therefore, of St. John's writings, of which we now speak, is an inherent and intrinsic authority quite independent of the accuracy or inaccuracy of the particular facts which they relate. Even supposing the fourth Gospel to be an ideal representation of the character of Christ, that ideal is one which appeals to us on its own authority. But if we do not believe it to be ideally correct, it is not possible that we can accept it as historically true. Whether or not it is historically true does not depend upon our acceptance of it as ideally correct, but we cannot accept it as historically true without admitting also its ideal accuracy. The issue, therefore, to which we are brought is simply this, Are we prepared to accept the Johannine conception of Christ as correct or incorrect, as right or wrong, as true or false? And the answer to this question does not depend upon the accuracy or inaccuracy of the details he has recorded, for these details are subsidiary to his conception; they are but the setting which preserves the jewel. The Evangelist's position is this: The character of Christ being what we all know it to be, is that character the Divine character, or is it not? Let us, however, by no means be misunderstood to affirm that it is a matter of secondary importance whether the

Evangelist's narrative is true or false—(quite the reverse, it is a matter of the very last importance) —but what we do say is, that the issue he raises is of another kind altogether, namely this, The character of Christ being what it is represented and supposed to be, is He, or is He not, the Son of God? In other words, the Evangelist himself postpones the critical to the moral question. He reverses the previous consideration; and whereas we are inclined to make the claims of Christ to turn upon the authenticity and veracity of the Gospel narrative, he fearlessly and openly advances those claims, and leaves them to take their chance of success, and to stand or fall upon their own intrinsic merits. And, according as we are of one heart and of one soul with him, we shall be willing to do likewise.

What, then, are these merits of which we speak? What is that inherent authority with which the Gospel of the fourth Evangelist comes charged? That authority and those merits are well represented by the words of our Lord, as there recorded, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." Now, it is not necessary to believe, or rather to insist upon believing, that these words were actually spoken by our Lord. The real question is, Supposing them to have been spoken by Him, are they or are they not true? To what extent would they have been true of

Him had He spoken them? Now, it is manifest that there are two ways of answering these questions: one is by sifting and criticising the evidence in order to arrive at some definite opinion how far Jesus of Nazareth was warranted in using such language, which would lead us into a very long and elaborate operation—an operation, moreover, be it observed, that the vast majority of the world is wholly precluded from undertaking; and the other is by taking the words and dealing with them exactly as we find them, and testing them each one for himself according to the very conditions which they prescribe, which are those of belief,—"that whosoever believeth in me, should not abide in darkness." While, therefore, we allow to the critic the utmost possible licence of disputing about the genuineness of these words, and even, if he pleases, of deciding finally that they were not spoken by Christ, it is self-evident that there is a much shorter, and, on the whole, a more satisfactory path near at hand available for those who are willing to take it, which will or will not lead to the requisite position, and that is the path of simple faith, not in the words themselves, but in the Person supposed to speak them. They may be tested experimentally, just as anything else is tested, which can alone be tested by experience. It is nothing to the point to say, "I have tested them by my own experience, and have found them not true," because that is only an

acknowledgment of the very darkness which proves their truth; and that they are true does not depend upon whether or not this or that individual has been able to certify himself about them, but upon the fact that *all who come within the circle of their influence* do find them true; and more than this they do not profess to assert. They hold forth a promise of light upon the condition of belief, and upon that condition only; and they imply that where there is not belief, there is nothing but spiritual darkness, however great the intensity of intellectual light. And we confidently put it to any man to say whether this is or is not their obvious literal meaning—whether they could have any other meaning by whomsoever they were spoken. If, therefore, they are the Evangelist's own words which he ascribes to Jesus, then he is himself responsible for any amount of criticism which our interpretation may tend to raise. The objection that may be taken must be taken against him. And the same must be said of our Lord if the words were really spoken by Him. The man who spoke thus, whoever he was, beyond all question laid himself open to the charge of circular reasoning, for he threw down a challenge which cannot be taken up except by violating the conditions upon which alone it was thrown down. He was content simply to advance his own personal claims, and left them to be rejected or allowed, as the case might be. We are

at liberty to reject them, but it does not follow, because we reject them, that they are invalid.

And there are two observations to be made here. First, there never was any man, as far as we are aware, who advanced such unmitigated pretensions as these. They surpassed in audacity all that ever was uttered by any religious teacher. And with justice, for if it was possible for any one to speak in such language about himself, it is manifest that no one else could speak so. If these rights legitimately belonged to him, they could be shared by no one else. The question is, therefore, not whether they can belong to any one besides Jesus, or to any one rather than to Jesus, but whether they can belong to any one at all. But there is only one Being to whom they can belong, and that is the Deity Himself; if, therefore, they belong at all to Jesus, it can only be because in Him the Godhead and the Manhood are one. And this is the simple issue which is raised by the words themselves, whether they were spoken by Jesus or by the fourth Evangelist about Jesus.

But it may be said that, being spoken by the fourth Evangelist himself, they are the unauthorised assertion of claims which were not advanced by Jesus. Now, we know from various passages in the synoptical Gospels,[3] too numerous to quote,

[3] The parallelisms exhibited in the Appendix, Note A, are the best proof of this. Nothing is more remarkable than the assumption of *finality* in Christ. "Come unto me, . . . and I will give

that if these identical words were not spoken by Jesus, there were other words scarcely less extravagant which He did speak. The self-assertion of the Sermon on the Mount is hardly less conspicuous than that of the fourth Evangelist. The emphatic, "I say unto you,"[4] many times repeated, together with the yet more solemn declaration, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity,"[5]—can leave no doubt upon any ordinary mind as to the nature of the claims put forth by Christ, and that they were not essentially different from those of the fourth Gospel. And, therefore, on the lowest possible ground, the issue that is raised by the words in question remains, after all, very much the same. And this is the witness of St. John to Christ, which asks for acceptance or rejection upon its own inherent authority, and upon that alone.

you rest," (St. Matt. xi. 28); and *this*, it must be remembered, was spoken prior to Peter's confession of Him as the Christ (St. Matt. xvi. 16.) The very phrase, "The kingdom of God," which was the keynote of His teaching, was tantamount to this assumption of finality. Indeed, finality was implied, and not seldom expressed, in all that He said and did. Which of *us* could presume to say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away?" (St. Luke xxi. 33.) And yet the "reputation" of Christ must stand or fall upon statements such as these.

[4] St. Matt. v. 22, &c. [5] St. Matt. vii. 22, 23.

But, secondly, we are not unable to estimate partially at least the truth of this assertion independently of belief in it altogether. For the words "I am come a light into the world," appeal to the world's verdict about Christ whether or not it believes in Him. And even in days of enlightenment like ours, no one can at all pretend that the light which has been brought into the world by any single individual, or by many individuals taken together, is to be compared with the light that was brought into it by Christ. Take the greatest of English, not to say of modern philosophers, Lord Bacon, a man who has shed the pure "dry" light of a true science over the length and breadth of two worlds, the new and the old, but what is his light compared with Christ's? What is the light of the Novum Organon compared with the light which streams forth perennially from one verse, one syllable, of the Gospel? Weigh the aphorisms of Bacon against "Your Father which is in Heaven," and will they not kick the beam? What is it for man to know his position and his power as the minister and interpreter of nature compared with the authoritative assurance that he may "have faith in God" who is the Lord of nature? What is the knowledge of the true method of induction compared with the knowledge of eternal life through Christ? What is the promise of victory over science compared with the unsearchable riches of the ever blessed words,

"Son, thy sins be forgiven thee?" What is the value of all human inventions, of printing, gunpowder, the loadstone, or the compass, compared with the priceless discovery that the gracious words which were spoken to one may be spoken to all, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace." It is true that in all these cases the just estimate can alone be formed where there is faith to appreciate the worth of the Gospel message. But it is no less true that the just estimate can alone be formed of Bacon's value where there is the knowledge requisite to appreciate his work. And it is a joy to think that he whom all the wise agree to acknowledge as "the first of those who know"[6] was himself the foremost also to accept with thankfulness the Evangelic offer of salvation, that he was willing to illustrate as well as to proclaim the everlasting truth that except as little children we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.[7] He was content to "pale the ineffectual fire" of his giant intellect before the brightness of

[6] "Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
The first of those who know."
TENNYSON'S *Palace of Art.*

So Dante says of Aristotle—

Poi che innalzai un poco più le ciglia,
Vidi il Maestro di color che sanno,
Seder tra filosofica famiglia.
Tutti l'ammiran, tutti onor gli fanno.
*Inferno*, iv. 130.

It is oftentimes interesting to trace the influence of Dante upon Tennyson.

[7] See "Novum Organon," i. 68, and his noble "Confession of Faith" prefixed to it.

the Gospel beam. Nor is there any one else who named with Christ can for a moment compare, whether we believe in Him or not, as a bringer in of light. He was the true Son of the Morning who came down from heaven, not as the false Lucifer by a precipitous fall "sheer o'er the crystal battlements," but by the joyous entrance of His mild and benignant ray into the darkness and sorrow of an estranged and perishing world. It is then in this capacity that He presents Himself and is presented to us, that whosoever believeth in Him should not abide in darkness. The fact that beyond all question He does bring and bear this light is the sole authority upon which He comes. For He comes in His Father's name as the fountain and source of light. The light which He brings "cometh down from the Father of lights." And as of old he that receiveth his testimony sets his seal to the acknowledgment that God is true. But except by receiving the light as God's light there is no other way in which it can be known in its relation to the truth of God. As long as the light is rejected, His very truth is regarded as falsehood.

Nor again is the acknowledgment of Christ's light consistent with a desire to assign to Him His relative position among the lesser lights of men under the pretext that they are all the lights of God. Because Christ distinctly claims to be

not only a light, but the one solitary light on those subjects upon which He sheds light. It is He who alone gives us authoritative information about God or ourselves, about sin, repentance, or forgiveness. If His light on these subjects is not authoritative it is no light at all, and we are still in darkness deceiving ourselves with fancied gleams of light, like those of the *ignis fatuus* hovering over the unwholesome dangerous marsh, which lead us away from safe and solid ground. If, on the other hand, His light is authoritative, then the claims of His unlimited self-assertion are more than vindicated, for there is no one else whose light can be proposed as of equal authority with His. If it is light at all it is the highest and the only light. Thus it is that the recognition of Christ at all resolves itself virtually into a recognition of Him altogether. If we take Him at all we must, to be consistent with ourselves, take Him at His own estimate. It is impossible to depreciate that estimate without rejecting Him altogether. The position in this respect to which the synoptical Gospels bring us is not substantially different from that of the fourth. We are not blind to, nor do we wish to underrate, the differences which do exist, but these differences are best measured in the light of the result which is common to all, which is nothing less than the unqualified exaltation in the scale of existence of the man Christ Jesus. The main difference between

the fourth Gospel and the others is this, that it proposes that result to us directly, omitting the preliminary stages by which also it may be approached. This is the method which the fourth Evangelist has chosen of bearing his testimony to Christ. That testimony would still be valid even though the subordinate matters of detail with which it was associated could be proved erroneous.

It is the boast of science that when she has achieved a particular result she is independent of the means by which she achieved it. The means may not have been the best; they may have been defective in themselves or have been wrongly used, but they have served their end, or, it may be, served an end for which they were not designed; and, the position being reached, we can kick away the ladder by which we reached it. Having planted our foot upon the shore we are independent of the craft which bore us thither. It is so with Christ. Having once laid hold on Him we are absolved from the necessity of perpetually retracing and examining the path by which we reached Him. There may be steep, miry, slippery, thorny places along the path; there may be gaps in it here and there, but when the ultimate position, which is Christ, is won, then all is won. Now it is the purpose of each Evangelist to land us in this position. It cannot be denied that every Evangelist is more or less indifferent to some of the

earlier steps along the path, but the ultimate result is plain in each, and nowhere more plain than in the last, and this position or result is one that speaks for itself. It is not only intelligible and visible before it is won, but final, satisfactory, conclusive, afterwards ; it is the position of entire belief—the result of simple and complete conviction.

It is plain, from the way in which our Lord here speaks, that this is the kind of authority He advanced for Himself, or, at least, that the Evangelist advanced on His behalf. "If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world but to save the world." He proposes Himself—He proposes truth for the acceptance of mankind—He speaks, that is, to the moral sense, to the spiritual constitution of mankind, and does so with the greater force because He proclaims in the same breath its entire liberty of action, professing only the benevolence of His own intentions—that He came not to judge but to save ; a profession, by the way, which is fully corroborated by other words from the synoptical Gospels, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." [8]

But, having certified this liberty, He does not fail to enter a warning against the abuse of it. "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my

[8] St. Luke xix. 10. St. Matt. xviii. 11.

words" (hereby showing that personal rejection of Himself is preliminary to and the cause of not receiving His words) "hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." That is to say, He distinctly disengages the authority of the Word from any personal relation to Himself, He leaves it to stand alone and takes the place merely of a witness to its truth.

It is obvious, therefore, that having done this He can do no more. He has made the light to shine, and he who will not recognise it can only abide in darkness. It is not possible to reject that light critically, and at the same time to believe in it. One or the other we may do, but no man living can do both.

And here again this issue is entirely independent of the accuracy with which these words are ascribed to Christ; for if they are simply the words of His disciple, then they are the testimony of that disciple concerning Him. Not about himself did that disciple write, nor to advance his own conception of Christ, so far as it was his own, but about His Master to whom He bore this witness, and in whose hands he was content to leave the result of it. And even if, as a matter of fact, such language was never used by Christ at all, it would nevertheless still remain true of the ideal truth, and so the only question that could arise would be, whether or not Christ was

the ideal truth, or whether there was any other ideal truth which He did not teach, and did not claim to be. In other words, the one definite issue which this writer sought to raise was this, What was the true character and estimate of Jesus Christ? Did His life, teaching, and death, as they are commonly known to the world, declare Him to be also the light of the world, and the one source of life to men? It is impossible to raise this question for the first time, even supposing St. John to have been the first to raise it, and to leave the world in the same position morally as it was before. A new light has entered into it, which must either be proved false or else be accepted as true. The very fact that this light shows the claim to divine honours to rest not upon victorious prowess, or the desolation of vast continents for the exaltation of a single man, but upon moral purity and goodness, upon a life passed in doing works of active benevolence, upon a heart manifestly and consciously at one with God, upon a love which could suffer and die, upon a sympathy that could feel for sin, and a humility which could stoop to shame—all of which we know from other sources than the fourth Gospel—is a fact so significant and so striking that, whether the idea be true or false, it is one that we cannot put aside without incurring the very gravest responsibility on account of it. Rightly, therefore, does our Lord abdicate the office of judge which the

synoptical Gospels assign to Him in favour of that Word which, according to the fourth Gospel, He has spoken, and which, whether he spoke it or not, raises a legitimate and inevitable issue which we are responsible for deciding.

To gather up, then, what has hitherto been said. We need not shrink from admitting, for the sake of argument, that the fourth Gospel gives us a new estimate of Christ, new thoughts of Him. And yet it is an estimate not absolutely inconsistent with that of the other Gospels, but one which may naturally be grafted on them, if indeed it is not one to which at times they pledge us. On the other hand, these thoughts are not altogether in themselves so new but that they waken in the mind a recognition of their truth apart from Christ. No man, for example, can read the ninth chapter of St. John and not feel that, supposing the miracle to have been wrought, the position assigned by the writer to Jesus was the true one. His position is at least provisionally true, while that of the Pharisees is provisionally false. But, more than this, the fourth Evangelist has given utterance to truth which, but for him, we should not have known, and yet truth which we cannot but instinctively recognise as true. For example, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." [9] There are probably few who will not acknowledge the wis-

[9] St. John iv. 24.

dom of this sentiment, and yet it is found only in the Gospel of St. John. So again, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin;" [1] and "Every one that doeth evil, hateth the light; neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." [2] These and many others are all words put into the mouth of Jesus of Nazareth. They were either spoken by Him, or they were not; if they were, He must have the credit of them; if they were not, the writer of the Gospel cannot in justice be deprived of it, and they do not cease to be true even though that writer be not St. John. Nay, more, I am not sure that they receive any higher degree of authority even though they were spoken by St. John or by Jesus. Their authority is simply the authority of truth, at once the highest authority because it is Divine.

Thus far, then, the authority of the fourth Gospel is undoubted and unimpeachable. Now comes its testimony concerning Christ, for it not only attributes these and similar statements to Jesus, but is manifestly written with the express purpose of absolutely identifying Him with the truth that is in them. It does not hesitate to represent Him as saying "I am the truth." And this is the one single issue that it raises. The light it has brought in is undeniable. It can neither be hidden nor disguised. But that is not the point. The real point is whether and

[1] St. John viii. 34. [2] St. John iii. 20.

in what sense Christ *is* the light. The fourth Evangelist so completely identifies the two, that he not only says Christ is the true light which lighteth every man, but also says virtually that there is no true light except in Christ. This is his witness to Christ. And we are irreconcilably at variance with him if we reject it. There can be no question about this. We may treat him with the highest possible honour. We may receive him as the disciple whom Jesus loved, but we are hopelessly at issue with him if we refuse to accept this testimony. On the other hand, it is surely possible to accept his testimony with the most implicit faith and to endorse it for ourselves, even though for critical or other reasons we may think it not absolutely certain that he was St. John. And the reason is because we believe in Jesus more than we believe in John, for we believe in Jesus to salvation, but believe in John as a preacher only of that salvation which is alone in Jesus.

And from this there follow two inferences. First, that testimony such as the fourth Gospel gives having been borne to Jesus the position of the world cannot be the same after as it was before it. For, to say the least, a particular theory has been enunciated concerning Christ which from its very nature is of the highest possible importance and imperatively demands either acceptance or rejection. The same pretensions

that St. John advances, to put it on the lowest ground, were never advanced of any other than Jesus. They can be advanced of no one else. They must either be true or false. Jesus either was or was not, is or is not, the Light of the World. If He was and is not the Light of the World, and we have rejected the Johannine testimony concerning Him, then we are gainers, for having had that testimony set before us and for having detected its invalidity. We can go on unshackled and unhindered in the infinite pursuit of truth. We can wipe out the eighteen centuries of Christian thought as a misconception and a blunder, and begin for ourselves anew :—

> "The world is all before us, where to choose
> Our place of rest, and Providence our guide."

If, on the other hand, He is the Light of the World, and we have rejected Him as such, then also our position cannot be what it was before the testimony concerning Him was given ; for in that case the truth is against us. We have rejected it, and whatever our conviction may be the truth remains the same, unchangeable and unchanged. The truth is constant but we vary, and if there be such a thing as truth and the truth is what its name implies, it cannot vary as we vary. It must be our judge, although we sit in judgment on it.

Secondly, if the witness of St. John to Christ is true, and He really is what he says He is,

then we cannot but believe that He has it in His power to confirm and will confirm this testimony concerning Himself in those cases where it is received. It was so, we have reason to suppose, in Apostolic times, even in cases where no claim was made to any special inspiration or Divine illumination. St. Paul says that the testimony he had borne concerning Christ was confirmed in the Colossians, and he speaks of the Ephesians being sealed, after they had believed, with that Holy Spirit of promise, the Spirit of Pentecost,[3] which is the earnest or pledge of our eternal inheritance. And it must be so now. The Lord not only knoweth His own, but He leaves them not without assurance that He knoweth them, and thus to the present hour and in every case he verifies the ancient words whether they be His or not, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness, and if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

[3] Preached on Whitsunday.

# LECTURE VII

## ST. JOHN'S MESSAGE TO THE AGE

ST. JOHN x. 7-10

"*Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*"

THERE can be doubt whatever that the writer of the fourth Gospel believed Christianity to be the absolute religion, that he recognised in Jesus the very incarnation of the absolute truth. Whether or not his conception of Jesus was correct, this, beyond all question, was his conception. As we have already seen, his belief in his Master was so deep, and his conviction of the truth of his testimony concerning Him so simple and sincere, that he thought it needed only to be given in order to succeed; it had an authority of its own which was the authority of truth. This at least was the way in which he advanced his testimony,

and he felt sure that it would maintain its ground. If it was true, it would have an authority of its own, and if it was not true, nothing that he could say in support of it would give it that authority. The careful concealment of his individuality throughout the Gospel is at least consistent with this belief in the absolute truth of his testimony to Jesus. He was anxious not to lessen in the very slightest degree the weight and value of the message in itself by blending with it any authority of his own.

But if the Evangelist's belief in Jesus as the truth itself was just, it is evident that his message would be possessed of a permanent and undying value. It is a mistake to suppose that the essential condition of mankind varies from age to age. The characteristics of human nature in the present day are substantially what they always were. The spiritual wants of humanity are the same now as ever. The fourth Evangelist proclaims the recognition of Jesus as the one remedy that is sufficient to meet these wants. "As many as received him, to them *gave he power to become the sons of God.*"[1] According to him, the reception of Jesus had the power to elevate the existing condition of humanity to a level with that of Divine Sonship. Now, if this is really the case, it is surely capable of being put to the test experimentally. Where Christ is received in the Apostle's sense, there

[1] St. John i. 12.

men either will or will not be elevated into sons of God according as his word is or is not true. Only we must not fail to observe that this elevation is contingent upon such reception. It cannot take place without it, neither can Jesus truly be received without its taking place. This is a statement which, according to St. John, is axiomatically true.

But here the preliminary position is assumed that the natural condition of mankind is characterised by some great defect which is represented as being nothing less than an absence of Divine life. Men are only sons of God in proportion as they are recipients of the true light. If they do not receive this light which shines in the midst of them, but is not identical with them, they abide in darkness and have no life. It is the want of that life which is derived from union with, and reception of, the true light in which consists their great defect. This at least is the way in which the writer of the Gospel represents the case ; the question arises whether or not it is the truth.

Now, without assuming that his representation is correct, let us inquire what appearance of reason there may be for it. There are three chief directions in which it might fairly be supposed that the amelioration of humanity might be sought for, if not secured. These are political organisation, the progress of arts and manufactures, and

the advancement of science. It will no doubt be admitted that not any one of these by itself is adequate to bring about that desirable condition of society or state of existence which man cannot but believe is his indefeasible birthright. For every one of them is more or less dependent on the other. A perfect form of government, without any knowledge of arts or skill in manufactures, would minister but superficially to the wants of mankind. Again, it is not possible to attain to a high proficiency in art, or to much skill in manufactures, without the cultivation of those scientific principles and that knowledge upon which they depend. And the pursuit of science alone, without the aid of those arts and manufactures upon which it also is so largely dependent, and to which it is so deeply indebted, would offer but a poor resource to man. Science, moreover, though conferring benefits on many, must necessarily be confined to a few. And the social benefits which science is enabled to bestow, may be said to bear but a small proportion to the labour and assiduity with which it must be pursued. In a defective political organisation also, the prospects of the arts and sciences cannot fail to languish. Neither does it appear at all probable that the increased development of political organisation will ever lead to such results as will prove an effectual remedy for the wants of mankind. At this period of the world's history there are not wanting pre-

cedents of various forms of government more or less highly developed and perfect in their kind. But it does not appear that the real condition of mankind has been materially affected or improved by any of them. Each in its turn has left society very much where it found it. Some of the very deepest forms of evil in our own day legislation is utterly powerless to touch; but if this be so, what hope for the real amelioration of mankind can be looked for from political development? The great philosopher of Greece, while proposing an imaginary scheme for a model republic, left on the surface of his work traces of his own impotence to deal with man's natural and inherent corruption. And whatever may be the possible advantages to be derived to society from the more perfect development of any one form of government, it is obvious that there are many points it must be wholly incompetent to meet. What effect would universal suffrage have upon the average of suicides? What protection would the ballot offer against the occurrence of commercial frauds? How would compulsory education eradicate crime? Would the removal of any political disability whatever produce any appreciable result on the moral condition of mankind? The answer in every case can be but one. It is certain that, as man's physical nature is liable to disease, and must eventually succumb to death, so his moral nature is infected with a disorder which

we term sin. We may labour to prove to ourselves or others the non-existence of sin as a fact; we may relegate it to the region of delusive and erroneous ideas, but the mere occurrence of the word in every language of the earth is a witness to the reality of a something in man's heart which answers to it. And it is plain that where legislation, or the most perfect form of polity, attempts to deal with the exigencies of sin is only in some special forms of its more aggressive outactings; the motive principle of sin is uninfluenced thereby. It can take no cognisance of sin as sin, but only of some of its more obtrusive and baneful consequences.

And just as political organisation is at a loss to deal with sin, while the very protection it offers to society is a witness to its existence, so also is the cultivation of art, or the progress of mechanical skill. It would be difficult to determine the precise degree in which the moral or spiritual condition of mankind has been improved by the accomplished proficiency of art or by the ingenuity of manufacture. The immediate tendency of art is to refine the taste, but the sphere of its operation is manifestly the senses, and the utmost refinement of the senses is consistent with great moral degradation. The world owes a debt of gratitude immense to the labours of a Rafaelle or a Giotto, but their exquisite and sublime conceptions, it must be confessed, have left humanity

very much where they found it. On the other hand, the achievements of mechanical skill, prodigious as of late years they have been and are likely to become, are powerless to affect in the slightest degree the innermost condition of mankind. They minister, indeed, to the comfort and the luxury of man; they tend to promote the greater happiness of the greater number; but the moral or spiritual condition of humanity they leave untouched. What is the influence of the electric telegraph or the steam engine on the statistics of crime, or how have manufactures tended to contract the limits of the vast empire of vice? Is it not a fact that the further we push our material conquests, the greater and more galling is the tribute they levy on what we term the lower classes of society. While civilisation ministers to the freedom of the few, we must not forget the bondage it entails upon the subject many. We may smile at the absurd eccentricities of a Rousseau, but wild as they are, they may surely be accepted as the witness of a man of undoubted genius to the impotence of civilisation to cope with the inherent evils of society.

But if all that has been said is true, and it can hardly be disputed, we may well hesitate to withhold our assent to the position of St. John that the natural condition of mankind is characterised by the absence of Divine life. The existence of one phenomenon alone, which it is impos-

sible for the politician, if not for the philosopher, to disregard, is more than sufficient to establish the general truth of the Apostle's statement, and that is crime. There is no nation that has advanced beyond the state of savagedom where crime is not recognised, and no condition of society in which it does not exist. Just as death is the general doom of the whole family of man, so crime is an accident which is common to, and characteristic of, the race ; not, indeed, like death, of every individual comprised in it, but still an incidental feature which cannot fail to be perceived in any general survey of the race. But crime is nothing more than the fully developed fruit of an earlier and more universal seed. That which produces crime in the individual is only another form of sin existing in the race. As every action must be recognised as the result or the concomitant of previously existing thought, so doubtless crime is but the particular development of the far more general sin. There is no one who does not feel in himself the workings of that evil principle which results in sin. Every one must be conscious of internal disorder which he cannot rectify ; every one must know that at times he has departed from the standard of rectitude, which in spite of himself he cannot but recognise ; he may explain the circumstance as he may, but there it is. Unless a man will maintain, not only that he is a law unto himself, but also that he has

never at any time infringed that law, it is impossible but that he must plead guilty to the charge of sin. And though such an admission of the charge as this may be widely different from that which the Apostle's language demands, it is, at any rate, to a certain extent a confirmation of its truth. And it must be remembered that in saying this we are dealing with an insensibility to sin which is at least highly exceptional. By far the large majority of mankind give evidence of a consciousness of sin which they would not care to deny. In fact the proofs of the existence of sin in the world around us are at once abundant and conclusive. There is no shutting our eyes to them in others, if, in our own case, we endeavour to hide them from ourselves. Sin is practically *the* evil of our nature. It is all pervading in its extent and irresistible in its dominion. It is useless, therefore, attempting to dispute the premises with which the Apostle starts.

But if this be so the question that next arises is, whether or not the remedy he proposes is adequate to deal with the inherent evil of sin. And here we may safely affirm that if it be not adequate, then there is no remedy at all. If the Gospel which St. John proclaims can be fairly shown to be powerless to grapple with this special disorder of our nature, then we need not be anxious either about his own identity or about the Divine authority with which his Gospel professes

to come. But forasmuch as the existence of this disorder is undeniable we may reasonably face the question as to how far the Gospel is adequate to deal with it. And here the form that the objection will probably assume is this, "We do not see that, even admitting the existence of sin, the influence of the Gospel in exterminating it has been very great. On your own confession the prevalence of crime is still to be deplored. The moral condition of mankind is anything but satisfactory. For nearly two thousand years the Gospel has been preached among men, and the very complaint they are beginning to raise against it is, that judged by its results it is a failure." But here again the only answer we can give is that the Gospel does not profess to work miracles when there is not the faith requisite for believing them. St. John emphatically says that "*as many as received him* to them gave he power to become the sons of God." And in this respect his testimony is clearly at one with that of the other Evangelists. Here, at least, the four are singularly unanimous. In short, it would seem that the one message which the Gospel brings is this, that the point in which human nature is defective on account of sin is its want of faith. It seems to say that where sin has inflicted the greatest damage on our nature is in the matter of belief. We are at fault because we do not believe. Sin has destroyed faith, and until faith is restored sin

cannot be overcome. Now if this be so it is plain that the success of the Gospel can only be in exact proportion to the belief with which it meets. The want of success in other quarters cannot fairly be charged against it.

Neither again can the merely partial success with which it works even where it is believed; because there again the sole condition upon which it can work at all is at the best but partially fulfilled, and under any circumstances the success which the Gospel challenges to itself is prospective rather than present. It professedly reserves its ultimate and perfect triumph to the future. We may fairly ask whether it gives any reasonable prospect of such final and complete success, but we cannot bring it as a charge against the Gospel that such success is not yet achieved. It were wiser to investigate the justice with which the Evangelists have uniformly seized upon man's want of faith as the real cause or seat of his moral and spiritual disorder. Is it true that he is a sinner just because he does not believe?[2] And first, it is impossible for us, constituted as we are, to pronounce upon the relative merits of belief and unbelief in the abstract otherwise than in favour of belief. It is more consonant with our innate ideas of right to believe in our fellow man than to disbelieve in him. It is impossible not to regard with feelings of abhorence the act of him who

[2] St. John xvi. 9.

would wilfully betray unsuspecting and trustful innocence. Why is this, if belief does not do honour, and disbelief do dishonour, to our nature? The character of him who believes in no one and trusts no one, however much of its serpent wisdom it may have gathered from knowledge of and contact with the world, is at least one from which we instinctively recoil. And we may certainly affirm the same of belief in the existence of a God. It is more honourable to human nature in the judgment—the instinctive judgment—of the vast majority of mankind to believe that there is a God, than it is to believe the contrary. We *know* and cannot help knowing that it is the fool only who says in his heart, There is no God. But, more than this, if it is consonant, as it plainly is, with our best feelings to believe in the being of a God, and if it is repugnant to our feelings to disbelieve in Him, is it not also manifest that the value of our faith must rise, as an essential possession of our humanity, in proportion to our estimate of the moral character and attributes of that Being in whom our faith is placed? Without, therefore, caring to decide upon the purely theoretical and abstract question whether it is better for man to entertain a debased and degraded faith rather than an enlightened unbelief—upon whether in the abstract superstition is better than scepticism—we need not hesitate to determine that it is more in accordance with the moral constitution God has

given him that he should believe rather than disbelieve ; as it is also clearly more advantageous for his well-being in society that faith rather than the absence of it should predominate. Abolish mutual confidence from among men and society must have an end. Trust is one of the primary laws of life, and distrust its greatest bane. Commerce languishes when credit is destroyed. Confidence is the first lesson of infancy as it is also the last hope of old age. The child has no fear in its mother's arms, and the man who trusts in God is delivered from despair.

So far, then, it is clearly consistent with the natural constitution God has given us that the greater development of faith should conduce to the greater development of our moral perfection. And so far the Evangelists were not wrong in seizing upon faith as the particular faculty which needed development in man. It is clear that the defection of faith in society is fatal to its well-being, and that in the most perfect conditions of society mutual confidence must abound. At the same time, in order that such a condition may exist, it is needful that faith be not subjected to rude or violent assaults. Those things that destroy faith must cease to exist. Treachery, deceit, dishonesty, and unworthy conduct of every kind which would shake confidence must come to an end. And then the complete restoration of faith between man and man would be the very

first indication of a restored and perfected condition of society.

Nor is it otherwise between man and God. It is obvious that as long as man does not believe in God there can be no communion with Him. For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.[3] And here also it is manifest that faith can only be perfect in proportion to the worthiness and perfection of the object of faith. The degradation of soul which results from the worship of base and unworthy objects is patent. The spiritual development of man is in direct proportion to the purity of his belief. If, therefore, it is the faculty of faith which needs development in man it is essential that the highest possible object should be set before him. Every one must allow that there can be no higher object than Truth. And if the object of man's religious worship were to be identified with Truth—with absolute Truth—then it is plain that the greatest possible impulse would be given to the development of his faculty of religious faith. For it is plain, in that case, that his faith would repose securely upon that which could not possibly fail him. Now it is precisely such an object as this that the Gospel of the fourth Evangelist proposes. It is absolutely certain, therefore, whether or not we reject his testimony, that his principles

[3] Heb. xi. 6.

are in strict accordance with the constitution of our moral nature. Even if we do not believe his message about Jesus we can see that the principles upon which he based that message are sound. That man should worship Truth as the very light and life of his being is clearly consistent with his moral nature. And if the object of his worship were to have any personal existence at all, that personal existence must be identical with Truth. It may be undesirable that Truth as the object of his worship shonld be personified, but *if* a personal being was to be that object he must be identical with Truth—he must be absolutely true. But this is exactly what St. John says our Lord was. There can be no question, therefore, but that on first principles we are all agreed. The Evangelist has proposed the very highest object to man's faith and worship that can be proposed. He has laid his finger on that very faculty in man, to the failure and imperfection of which it seems that his moral disorder may be traced. This, you will observe, is an essential element in St. John's witness to Christ, and it is wholly and entirely independent of the truth or falsehood with which he has identified the sole object of man's worship with the man Christ Jesus.

Now, let us be perfectly clear on this matter before we take one step further. We are provisionally prepared to admit that the fourth Evangelist may have been quite wrong in assign-

ing to Jesus the high attributes he assigned. The Life and Light of men, the Truth, the Fulness of Grace, and the like may have been terms not only to which Jesus of Nazareth was not entitled, but to which He made no claim Himself. We are willing to grant this provisionally. But then we join issue upon the first principles which are involved in this ascription of attributes to Jesus, and which attributes are capable of being estimated apart from any such ascription. And then we ask, Are not these the very principles upon which all adoration and worship must be based? Is it not plain that if there is an Object of worship for man His characteristics must be these? Can man with all his god-like faculties reasonably consent to worship any being in whom such attributes of Deity are not found? And if it be affirmed that the highest object of man's adoration and worship is Truth, is it not certain that this language is likewise applicable to Truth—that the possession of these qualities may be predicated of Truth? The one question, therefore, to which we are again brought back, and which alone remains, is the justice or injustice with which the fourth Evangelist identified Jesus with the Truth. Being, as he was, obviously right upon first principles, was he right or wrong here?

Now, in answering this question, we must not fail to observe that one or the other he certainly

was, he could not possibly have been both. He was not partly right and partly wrong. Jesus of Nazareth either was or was not the Light and Life of men: He either was or was not the Truth. If He was not, then the pretensions which He put forth, or which were put forth for Him, were false, and there is no middle position. And this leads us to another principle which the whole of the Evangelist's teaching involves, namely, the essential and inherent difference between truth and falsehood. Falsehood according to him is not another form of truth; it is the mortal antagonist of truth. If, therefore, he asserts that man's highest object of worship is truth, he means not truth in which falsehood is inseparably and indistinguishably mixed, but absolute truth which expels falsehood. The very existence of the terms truth and falsehood as expressive of primary ideas in man's mind is a witness to the existence of a discriminating faculty in him which refuses to confound them. And the very form of these terms in our language is a witness to the simplicity of truth in comparison with falsehood. For truth is a primitive and simple word, but falsehood a derivative. We speak, moreover, of the true and the untrue, not of the false and the un-false. Truth is the standard, falsehood the departure from it. Truth is the primary existence, falsehood the secondary and subsequent. "He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the

truth."[4] The truth existed, therefore, prior to his existence who abode not in it. It was the original and ancient law from which he departed. Henceforth his reminiscence of the early truth was that by which alone he could hope to maintain the perpetually falling cause of falsehood. The realm of falsehood could only be upheld by the counterfeit presentment of former truth. The judicious admixture of truth with falsehood was that which would warrant him the greatest success among men, in whom truth was still a fundamental principle of their nature, although they were under the dominion of falsehood. But this admixture could constitute no element in the original kingdom of the truth which his defection had left incorrupt. As far as our own experience is concerned, we may find it hard to discriminate between these rival elements, because we are alternately under the influence of each; but the power of belief even now remains with us by which we can realise the existence of an empire of the Truth, in which falsehood can have no place. And in this empire is the habitation and the throne of God. This is the dwelling-place of the Being whom we worship. And such the nature of it must be, unless following the inevitable law by which the worshipper acquires by degrees the character of the being whom he worships, we would never become emancipated from the domin-

[4] St. John viii. 44.

ion of falsehood but would remain to all eternity partly false and partly true.

It would seem, then, that the conception of a being whose prerogative is absolute and unmixed truth may be regarded almost as a necessity of our nature, and cannot in any way be held questionable merely because characteristic of the teaching of St. John. Such a Being, then, must exist if the deepest instincts of our moral nature do not give us the lie. The point in which St. John's teaching becomes exposed to criticism is when he identifies this Being with Christ. We may reasonably concede him his premises, but can we grant his conclusions? This is the very question which he raises. We can see that his conception of the Supreme Being must be right; He must be absolute truth which is opposed to and excludes falsehood; but how about Jesus as the human manifestation of this Being? As far as His claims to be so regarded are just, He likewise must be characterised as absolute Truth. This, however, is the point to be decided, but nothing less than this is *the witness of St. John to Christ.*

We begin, therefore, to see more clearly the nature and bearing of our Lord's words, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." The question is not even whether our Lord spake these words of Himself, but whether being spoken they are true of Him. Of course, we do not for a

moment maintain that because St. John, or the fourth Evangelist, has recorded them they were really spoken by Jesus or are true of Him, but we do most emphatically say that their truth with reference to Jesus is *the* question, and the only question which the author of the Gospel raises, and that it is a question, as he has put it, which is capable of being decided on its own merits, and that so he would have us decide it. For why? We have clear proof that pretensions of this kind were really advanced by Jesus, if not in these identical words, and therefore the testimony of the last Evangelist is a testimony differing in form rather than in substance. We may cordially accept that testimony concerning Jesus, even though for critical or other reasons we may not be fully persuaded, or may not be able fully to persuade others, that it is the testimony of St. John; but if we believe it to be the testimony of St. John we shall scarcely question whether it applies to Jesus, though indeed we may fail to see the full bearing of that application.

If, then, we are right in our estimate of St. John's testimony to Jesus, what is the nature and value of his Message to the Age? Its nature is briefly this, that there is truth and life alone in Jesus. "I am the truth." "I am the Light of the world." "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." These are, every one of them, state-

ments which, whether made by our Lord or not, whether written by St. John or not, will all be disputed on the ground of their own merits; and on this ground alone we desire that they should be disputed.

Now it may be doubted whether there is any statement more opposed to very much of the thought of the present day than that which would ascribe the exclusive possession of the truth to Jesus in such a way as to involve an admission of the words, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." These words themselves impose a yoke which is felt to be simply intolerable. But is it a yoke from which we can afford to escape? If Jesus was the Saviour of the world, then it must be true that there is no salvation in any other. He would not have laid down His life and stooped to the death of the cross to be *in part* a Saviour conjointly with Zoroaster or with Buddha, with Confucius or Laotse. We do not deny that there were fragments of truth—"broken lights"—of Him in these and other teachers; we do not deny that the wisdom of their wise sayings was part of the central wisdom which dwelt in Him, but we do say, in common with all the Evangelists, that He laid claim not only to a brighter light, but also to the exclusive possession of a truth which was not in them, and that this Truth and Light was in one word Himself. And to say this, is not to presume to pass any judg-

ment whatever on the future destiny of these great teachers, who, so far as they were wise and true, doubtless had a mission from God, or of those who were taught by them—it is not to say or to imply that they cannot be saved—but merely to affirm, what is in fact a self-evident truth, that they were ignorant of Christ's salvation ; and to say further, that those who, having had *this* salvation offered to them reject it, are not *now* saved, and cannot be saved so long as they reject it.

Now this comes before the men of our own day and generation as a hard saying which they will not hear, but it is most unquestionably involved in the testimony of St. John to Christ, and not only in the testimony of St. John but likewise of all the Evangelists, and, as far as we know anything at all about it, in the testimony of our Lord Himself. That the bright shining of the light of day is scattered alternately over half the world is no argument against, but on the contrary the direct consequence of the centralisation of that light in the body of the sun. The diffusion of light points us to its original source in one centre. The sun's light and heat penetrate into ten thousand places where he cannot be seen, but if we would enjoy to their fullest extent that light and heat we must place ourselves under the direct influence of his beams ; and we must gather those beams in the prism or the lens if we would

have certain special results produced by them. In like manner, we may admit the greatest possible diffusion of the light of truth among the religions and philosophies of the ancient world consistently with an acknowledgment of Christ as the one central source of light. Whatever light they had may have been unconsciously derived from Him, and if He was the true light which lighteth every man, it could have had no other origin. But the admission of this truth to the fullest extent is by no means inconsistent with the confession of another, but rather suggestive of it, that it is only by direct intercourse with this original source of light that we can become subject to its influence, or be penetrated by its warmth. Nay more, it would be just the same whatever or wherever the central light might be. Unless it is a fact, which the analogy of nature forbids, that the light of truth is only like the diffusion of a subtle and luminous vapour which has no central source, it is obvious that the more direct our relation to the centre, the more complete our possession of the light. The question then again must turn upon whether or not Christ is the central source of light. If He is, then all that has been said of Him or that He says of Himself is true. And all that ever came before Him, however bright or true their light, can only be regarded as thieves and robbers, in proportion as they or their fol-

lowers have refused to ascribe their light to Him, and to recognise in Him the true source from whence it flowed.

And as we can clearly see for ourselves not only that, if what Jesus says of Himself is true, this is a consequence which must necessarily follow ; but also that, if there is any central source of truth at all, the like consequence must follow with reference to that source, be it what or where it may ; so we cannot fail to perceive that the value of this message of the fourth Evangelist turns and turns only upon our willingness to identify Jesus with this central source of truth. That is to say, our own individual possession of the truth, according to this writer, depends upon, and is proportionate to, our readiness to accept Jesus as the appointed channel through whom we receive it. It is not that other men are less true than ourselves, or are debarred from access to those sources of truth which are open to all who seek them truly ; but that, by accepting Jesus as the one Person in whom alone truth absolute dwells, we are brought into a line with that particular point towards which all the manifold rays of truth converge, and in a line with which that convergence can be alone perceived. Thus, according to St. John, the believer in Jesus is a man of the widest possible sympathies, inasmuch as he can thankfully recognise truth, wherever it may be found, though at the same time he is bound, by his allegiance to

his Master, to hail it as an emanation from His original light, and to trace it back to him. There the light becomes intensified and brighter than it can be when regarded as having a substantive existence of its own underived from any source.

St. John's message to the age, then, is simply this, that whereas men now-a-days would make Christ to be but as one light among many, he declares Him to be the central light of all. Now, from the very nature of the case, this is a statement which does not admit of direct demonstrative proof. Till the sun was acknowledged as the centre of our system no calculations could be correct. The fundamental error which made the earth the centre threw them all into confusion. When the sun was taken as the centre, all were rectified. It is not otherwise with Christ; we must first take Him for the central light, if it be but tentatively, then we shall discover clear and palpable proof that He is so. He will bring all our calculations into order. Then the light will shine in the darkness and dispel the darkness, which before had comprehended it not. But this is obviously a result which can only be perceived where it is accepted. We cannot deny the truth of the result and yet perceive it. The utmost we can promise is a result commensurate with that which the Evangelist has recorded. "As many as received him, *to them* gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on

his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This is the witness of St. John to Christ, but we cannot fail to observe that it begs the whole question at issue between the adversary and ourselves.

Our position, then, is simply this. The fourth Evangelist states a truth which he knows and has found to be true. It is a truth, he is persuaded, which will always verify itself. What it needs is repetition rather than corroboration. The clear, emphatic, enunciation of the truth, backed with the evidence of entire conviction, may be trusted to achieve its own results. If that will not achieve them, we may rest assured that argument will be powerless to do so. Every man, no matter who he is, who believes in Jesus as the fourth Evangelist believed in Him, is, like that Evangelist, a witness to Jesus, whom it is not possible to set aside. His logic may be at fault, his rhetoric feeble, his reasoning inconclusive, but his faith is simple, clear, and strong; and as such, it affords its own evidence to men. The bodily presence of Jesus, as the world knows Him in the Gospel history, so obscure in its origin, and so contradictory, as some would have us believe, in its narrative, may be weak, and His speech contemptible; but every man who, with the whole heart, believes in Jesus, is a living epistle from that master-mind at once weighty and powerful,

and known and read of all men. And as the work proclaims the workman, so does every Christian proclaim Christ; for he is a living witness to those identical truths which Paul and John proclaimed, and which are substantially the same in their intrinsic essence, however great and manifest their superficial variations.

We know full well, brethren, that an apology may be demanded of us for the utterance of sentiments such as these in this place, and from this foundation, but we are persuaded that, after all, they are neither inopportune in time nor inappropriate in place, and we are quite sure that the memory of Boyle is honoured rather than dishonoured by such a method of dealing with the cause of that Master whom he served. We may concede point after point in argument, and remove difficulty after difficulty, but sooner or later the only questions we shall have to answer will be these, Whether or not we will have this man to reign over us? Whether or not He is the truth of truths? Whether or not He is the light of lights? Whether or not He is that light of the world, which whosoever followeth shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life?

But it may be said, Can you seriously ask us to believe that Jesus of Nazareth, the son of the carpenter, was really the greatest of all philosophers, the wisest of all sages; nay, more, that He was this to such a degree as to be virtually the

only philosopher and the only sage? Can you reasonably maintain that salvation is to be hoped for only by those who acknowledge Him to be this, while for the great body of mankind, who are either ignorant of Him or who are unable in their consciences thus to acknowledge Him, there is nothing promised but the terrific alternative of damnation? Is this the Gospel which you have to preach to men, and can you verily persuade yourself that it is a Gospel of the grace of God, of that compassionate and all-merciful God whom Jesus Himself taught us to call Father?

No, my brethren, to state the question thus is to overstate it. This is emphatically not St. John's message to the age. While we admit that belief in Jesus has not only the promise of this life, but also of that which is to come—while it is nothing less than eternal life which the believer finds in Jesus—yet we must bear in mind that it is with direct reference to the present life and to the present moment of this life that His offer of salvation is made. He says virtually, "You are helpless and lifeless *now:* come to me and I will give you life—eternal life which I alone can give. It is only by coming to me that you can receive it; but come to me and you shall have it, for he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." If there is no answer in the consciousness to this condition of utter helplessness—to this want of life—then

it is obvious that Christ's offer, however true and just, can only fall powerless on the soul, but it does not follow that it may not be just and true, although it does so fall: it does not follow but that man's condition without Christ may be as helpless and lifeless as He says it is, and that it must continue so as long as he deliberately stands apart from Christ.

Again, the person of the historic Christ is not to be placed higher or lower in the scale of virtue or philosophic excellence as we might place Socrates or Plato, Buddha or Muhammad. It is not by so placing it that we believe or disbelieve in Jesus. But the person of the historic Christ is the abiding reminiscence in time of One who is from everlasting to everlasting—the memorial left in human history of One who is invisible but who is alive for evermore. It is not that we predicate the existence of a certain man and then say that this man was Divine—was the Son of God—was the Deity Himself; but we say to every man, There is that in you which witnesses to God, to your estrangement from God; but which nevertheless desires to know God, which longs for the completeness which is in God and not in yourself, and which so far yearns after God and is capable of hailing with gratitude any authentic message which may come from God; and we say that the image of Himself left by Christ on the plastic memory of the world is at once such as to do

justice to the highest conceptions we can form of God, and is also pre-eminently calculated to satisfy to the full the deepest yearnings of our nature after God, and to allay the most gnawing wants of the human heart; and that if there *is* such a God as the character of Christ, supposing it to be Divine, would warrant us in believing that there is, then we have in that God a Father to whom we can return with penitence and love, and then we have in Christ and the character of Christ that permanent assurance, that continual pledge, of the unchanging nature of God, which, when accepted, cannot fail to bring peace, health, and satisfaction, as well as exuberant gratitude and joy to the believing soul.

And here it must be remembered that the insinuation can not be thrown out that the wish was father to the thought, that the instinctive desire after such a God as this has created the supposed realisation of it; because then we shall have all the facts of history against us. The supposed character of Christ is beyond all question the result of an actual human life lived among men. That character is unique in the annals of the world. It is attributed to no one else, and there is no reason, *a priori*, why it should be attributed to Christ, or why, if fictitious, it should not be attributed to others besides Christ; but being attributed as it is to Christ, and to Christ alone, and being so attributed to Him that it can

nevermore be dissociated from Him, we are simply constrained to exclaim with Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God," and then we can faintly understand, but fully and entirely believe, the wisdom of His own words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

# LECTURE VIII

## ST. JOHN'S PLACE IN HOLY SCRIPTURE

ST. JOHN v. 39

*"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."*

THERE can be no doubt that one of the great difficulties experienced by thoughtful men in the present day when contemplating the Gospel record of the life of Christ arises from this circumstance, that they labour to recall the past and invest it with the life it must have had when present, rather than take the record of the past as a witness to the living present, and a means of holding intercourse with Him who ever *is*, and is eternally the same. And yet this is the way in which preeminently the fourth Evangelist presents Christ, not so much or solely as a person who once was, but as a being who is everlastingly the Life. And there can be no question but that when Christ is thus apprehended, any difficulties that may arise in studying the human record of His Life, provided they be not insuperable in their very

nature, must sink into a position of comparative unimportance. If we admit human agency at all in the composition of the Gospels, it is hardly possible to exclude certain elements of error, and it is obvious that this might enter probably to a much greater extent than it can be shown to have done, without invalidating the general character of the narrative. And it is surely far more reasonable to suppose that such may have been the case than it is to insist upon the mechanical operation of a supernatural Power sufficient to preserve the records which were manifestly and necessarily the work of men from the addition of any particle of error, and from any traces of divergence. Judging them merely as human records of a human life, it would not be reasonable to reject the Gospels on account of the discrepances they contain. These discrepances are certainly not greater than, probably not so great as, those which would inevitably be found in any four separate narratives of the same events. Supposing, therefore, the truth of our Lord's human existence, there is nothing in the mere divergences of the records to invalidate it as a fact. It is conceivable that much greater divergences might have existed without the truth of it being invalidated. Nay, it would not be reasonable to demand, in four independent writers narrating the same events, four absolutely unvarying records, or four records which presented no con-

siderable discrepances. If the Gospels are in any sense human productions, they must necessarily vary, perhaps even err, in minor and unimportant points. This is not to say that the Evangelists actually have erred, but that it is conceivable they might have erred without invalidating their testimony.

Now in the present lecture we shall endeavour to show that the writings of St. John, and notably so the Gospel which may be taken as representing them, have a certain definite position in the New Testament and in Holy Scripture generally—a position which can alone be fairly estimated by supposing them omitted from the cycle of the canon. What the Old Testament would be without the New, that the New Testament would be without the writings of St. John.

It is impossible not to see that there is a certain supplemental relation borne by the New Testament to the Old—that for some reason or other there is a subtle bond between the two which can be discovered between either and no other writings whatsoever. It is certain that but for the existence of the Old Testament the New could never have been written; yea, more, that Christianity as it appeared could never have originated. And this is a statement quite independent of any arbitrary definition we may assign to the canon. For without the Old Testament

not one of the Gospels, nor the Acts of the Apostles, nor one of the Epistles, nor the Apocalypse, could have been written, or even fabricated, supposing we chose to say that any or all are fabrications. The relation, therefore, between the New Testament and the Old is a fact which cannot be controverted—a fact quite irrespective of any ideal unity with which we may be in the habit of investing the later Scriptures. And this relation is a phenomenon which cannot be produced at will by the substitution of any other writings for those of the New Testament. We may take, if we please, the early Christian literature of the first two centuries, and though it is equally true of this that it could not have existed without the Old Testament, yet it is no less obvious that it could not have existed without the New; as it is also confessedly later than almost all the books comprised in the New. The existence of this literature, as a whole, as well as in detail, pre-supposes the existence of the New Testament; it cannot, therefore, take the place of the New Testament in the relation which that bears to the Old.

Now these are statements which it is wholly impossible to controvert. We may deny, as the Jews deny, that the New Testament is the fulfilment of the Old, but it is not possible to deny the relation of cause and effect which subsists between the Old Testament and the New. And

therefore, if we choose to regard the Old Testament apart from the New, we cannot do so without ignoring the relation between cause and effect, nor without looking at a work alone and by itself with no reference whatever to another work which cannot but be regarded as a most remarkable product of that earlier work. Whatever we may think of the relation between the Old Testament and the New, the fact that it subsists is one that cannot be denied, and it is a fact, moreover, which has no parallel in the literature of the world. Take away, therefore, the New Testament from the Old, and you have a cause left without an effect, or rather you have an effect, and a most remarkable effect, which can only be traced to a particular cause, while you refuse to regard the cause in its relation to that effect.

Now the relation of St. John's writings to the other books of the New Testament generally is not very different from the relation which subsists between the Old Testament and the New. To a certain extent it is the relation of cause and effect. We may safely say that the fourth Gospel could not have been written if the materials of the other three had not existed. This is not to pronounce upon their relative date, but simply to affirm that the germ of the fourth Gospel is to be found in the substance of the other three, and that if there had not been in the early consciousness of Christendom that which was expressed and recorded in

the synoptical Gospels the very existence of the fourth would have been an impossibility. To a certain extent it is possible to conceive of a mythical origin for the first three Gospels, but a mythical origin for the fourth without the other three is inconceivable. The fourth Gospel represents a development of an earlier idea. It could not itself have formed the basis of that idea which the other Gospels express. So far, then, the relation between the fourth Gospel and the others is illustrated by the relation between effect and cause.

And yet, on the other hand, it is obvious that this relationship does not subsist to the same degree between the first three Gospels and the last as between the Old Testament and the New. The illustration holds good, but it is more applicable in the former than the latter instance. In the latter instance the effect is one which might have been foreseen—it was inevitable: in the former it was not so. It was natural that a history such as that which the three first Evangelists have preserved should generate an idea like that embodied in the work of the fourth, but no one could have said beforehand that after an interval of nearly five centuries the Old Testament should result in such a production as the New—should become the efficient cause of a supplement so utterly unlike, and yet so entirely dependent on, it.

But in proportion as this relationship of cause and effect between the Old and New Testaments is admitted, it will also be difficult to deny that our interpretation of the Old must be influenced by our estimate of the New. In proportion as the light of the New Testament is acknowledged it must be allowed to reflect backward on the Old. It is not possible for us as Christians, on the platform of the New Testament, to reject its aid in our interpretation of the Old. If the actual relationship between them, as cannot be denied, is one of cause and effect, we can hardly escape from determining whether or not the effect was a legitimate and a right one. And, if it is, then we cannot but regard the Old Testament in its relation to that effect. So neither can we fail to estimate the writings of the New Testament in relation to the light which is shed upon them by those of the fourth Evangelist, more especially if we accept that light as genuine and true—not as delusive and misguiding. The shining of that light, if it be not erroneous, must necessarily have its influence and effect upon the view we take of those writings, and on our opinion of the facts related in the Gospels.

Nor is such a consequence unnatural or unjust. We all know what a different aspect the same landscape assumes according as we behold it, on a cloudy day or in bright and glowing sunshine; according as we view it before sunrise, in the still

moments of sultry noontide, or when the heat is over in the tranquil calm of the dewy evening. Certain it is that when the sun is high and the light strongest we shall discover many points which before we could not discern, and it would be something more than unreasonable to overlook or to disregard these points on the ground that they were only visible in the sunshine. The knowledge of their existence so revealed would naturally and justly influence our notion of the landscape as a whole. Now this illustration fairly represents what the influence of the writings of St. John must be if the light they shed is a true and not an artificial or fictitious light; that is to say, if the view they give us of the life and character of Christ is a true and correct view.

And this view may be perfectly correct and true even though much of the language be the writer's own, and even though some of the incidents he records may be imaginary rather than strictly historical; but if it is correct, it must have a reflex bearing on what the other Evangelists have related. It cannot indeed be allowed materially to alter their testimony, but it may set what they have written in another and a stronger, though for all that in a perfectly natural and intelligible light. And, moreover, if that is the case, these writings of St. John must also be allowed to be not without their corresponding influence on the writings of the Old Testament

itself. For, as the New Testament has a reflex influence on the Old, and as they must influence the New, so also must the effect of their influence be felt indirectly on the Old. Now, this is in the way of additional light brought in, which we can refuse or not as we please, but which does produce real and manifest results.

What, then, are these results? First, the Apostle's conception of a mortal man, who is also God, must be allowed to throw very great light not only on much of the language, but also on some of the incidents of the Old Testament, as it cannot fail to clear up, as nothing else can, many of the sayings ascribed to Christ by the synoptical Evangelists. For instance, it is a conspicuous feature in the writings of the prophets that they speak alternately, and very often in the same sentence, now in their own person and now in the person of God. Such a phenomenon is indeed to be explained on the assumption of unqualified audacity on the part of the prophets, by which they did not shrink from identifying themselves with the person of the Most High, and from claiming for their own spontaneous utterances the solemnity and authority of a Divine announcement; but it may well be doubted whether this is a theory that is at all tenable, or whether it can be reconciled with many obvious features of the prophetic office; and however it may be explained, it is at least certain that it becomes susceptible of

the very fullest explanation when regarded in connection with the clear testimony of St. John. If a mortal man ever was God, and was in the beginning with God, then we can at once understand the propriety with which He whom no man hath seen, nor can see in His ultimate Divine essence, can be said to have appeared to the patriarchs and to the elders under the old dispensation. Then, we can understand the ambiguity with which the narrative records certain angel visits, while it leaves us in doubt as to who these angels were, because of the mysterious language in which it speaks of them—then we can understand how David and the Psalmists of various ages appropriated to themselves and their own circumstances words expressive of feelings, and incidents even, which can scarcely have been realised in them—then we can understand the many passages throughout the Old Testament which are so startling in the terms employed, that critics have sought to excuse or to condemn them by an epithet which may be considered as invented expressly for the purpose, and have called them anthropomorphic—then we can at least partially understand the sudden assumption and divestment of human or Divine personality in the fervid rhetoric of the prophets ;—and then finally we can understand also how much of the Mosaic ceremonial could at once come with Divine authority, even while the things enjoined were nothing

better than carnal ordinances imposed upon a carnal and stiff-necked people until the time of reformation. It were in the highest degree absurd and contradictory to affirm that if St. John's conception of a mortal man who was also God were true in fact, and that His existence was an eternal existence, specially manifested under the conditions of mortality and time, such a conception would not throw great light upon phenomena like these, and light far superior to any which could be brought to bear upon them from any other quarter. We must decide, therefore, whether there is evidence sufficient to warrant us in rejecting such light as this, when the only consequence can be, to leave ourselves, comparatively speaking, in total darkness? May not light which so conspicuously "doth make manifest," according to the Apostle's affirmation, itself be really "light?" May not the very clearness and lucidity of that which it reveals be taken in evidence of the nature and reality of the light?

But, again, there is another feature in St. John's conception of Jesus of which we must also take account, the feature, namely, which represents Him as that Man who is the Root of every man. St. Peter tells us expressly that the spirit of Christ dwelt in the prophets—that it "testified before hand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow;" but this statement becomes even more luminous and intelligible when we learn that

the mortal man who was also God was none other than that Light which lighteth every man, and to be identified with that Wisdom whom the Lord possessed in the beginning before His works of old, whose delights were ever with the sons of men. For then we can understand how patriarchs and psalmists and prophets, by virtue of their closer union with the True Man, who is the Root of every man, could speak in language the meaning of which would only fully be revealed when the True Man Himself was revealed. Then, if the Christian consciousness really was in David, we can understand how he, by reason of it, could say in words which cannot have been true of himself, "They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots."[1] Then we can understand how the same consciousness, speaking by Zechariah, could say, "They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver"—"a goodly price that I was prized at of them,"[2] and "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born."[3] Then we can understand how the same consciousness, speaking by the prophet Micah, could distinctly declare, "They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek."[4] It is beyond all controversy that the

[1] Ps. xxii. 18. [2] Zech. xi. 12, 13. [3] Zech. xii. 10. [4] Micah v. i.

application of these and many like words to circumstances in the life and death of that Man who was *the* Christ—the root and foundation of humanity as the Son of Man—gives a meaning and life to them which no other known or conceivable interpretation can give. This is the aspect they assume when seen beneath the light. Their meaning becomes feeble and attenuated, meagre and diluted, if we refer them to other circumstances, more especially when these circumstances must be imagined, because they are not known. Let us be clearly understood. We do not say that this *is* their meaning, but only, that *if* it were their meaning, they would be more intelligible than they can otherwise be shown to be. The writers of the New Testament do not hesitate to declare that this is their meaning. The Gospel of St. John sets before us such a conception of Christ, that we are enabled by it, at least partially, to understand how it was that men speaking many centuries before should have used language which at any rate appeared to anticipate the more striking features of Christ's life. If He being the true Light which lighteth every man—that light which, in proportion as a man is devoted to the truth, and true to himself, he perceives and recognises—dwelt pre-eminently in certain favoured individuals of the stock of Abraham, and spoke of Himself by them—we can well understand that their language would at times

bear witness to Him in terms inapplicable to them —that their tongue, as the pen of a ready writer, would discover and unfold the good matter of which their heart was inditing. This, to say the least, brings us nearer to the process by which we can conceive that holy men of old, without losing their true and proper individuality, as responsible beings, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; for, under His influence they were so elevated out of and above themselves, that their independent personal consciousness was merged in the consciousness of the Christ in them; the natural, for the time, was wholly subordinated to the spiritual, and, "out of the abundance of the heart" of God, with which they were at one, their "mouth spake."

The same fact, moreover, which points us to Christ as the root of every man, enables us to understand how no religion of the world has ever been without some elements of truth; nay more, May we not say that it is impossible to conceive of any living man so given over to the spirit of lies as to be entirely devoid of truth? The real foundation of our being is Christ, who was manifested as the truth. In a personal union with Him we become true; we enter into the Light of Truth. Far as we may wander in our search after, and widely as we may differ in our apprehension of the truth, it is still the truth only for which we long. No man could deliberately

choose a lie knowing it to be one. We are under obligations to the truth which we cannot disown. We are bound to it by ties which we cannot wholly sever. Hence in the old religions of the world, and the old philosophers of Greece and Rome, we meet with scintillations and coruscations of the truth which at times it may be we are at a loss to estimate in comparison with the Light of Christ.[5] The only questions which can fairly arise are these: Is there or is there not some one person in whom these various rays of truth converge—in whom the separate fragments combine to form a whole? Is it likely that such a person has ever been seen upon earth moving among men? Is there any character recorded in history to whom such a function may fairly be ascribed? Is there more than one for whom we can advance the claim? Is it not a fact that if there is any one, the Christ of the Evangelists, the Jesus of St. John, can alone be He? We may

[5] I may perhaps be allowed to remark here that I am acquainted with no one book of the ancient world so pregnant with sentiments of practical truth and wisdom, and so conspicuous at times for its correspondence with the utterances of the Higher Wisdom of the Gospel, as the "Hitopadesa."—Cf. *e.g.*, "The moon does not withdraw her light from the dwelling of the outcast," (Hit. i. p. 19. Edit. Schlegel and Lassen), with "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."—St. Matt. v. 45, &c. &c. The jewels, indeed, are both numerous and brilliant, though there is yet room to say, *O si sic omnia*. The date of the "Hitopadesa" is about the 7th or 8th century of our era.

safely say there is no one miracle related by the synoptists as wrought by Christ, no one parable spoken by Him, which does not receive additional significance and light from being viewed in relation to the Johannine idea of Christ as the truth in every man.

Now it cannot for a moment be alleged that this idea was consciously added by the writer for the purpose of affording this additional illustration. We believe he wrote to supplement the narratives of the other Evangelists, but not to supplement them in this way. The kind of illustration given is such as arises casually from the juxta-position of his narrative with theirs. The contribution is unintentional and undesigned, but it is one which, being rendered, it is impossible to do without. It is the only key which can unlock the innermost casket containing the treasures of the highest value. And the same is true whether or not the fourth Gospel was the work of St. John, whether it was written in the second century or the first. The idea is one which, having been projected, we cannot surrender without a loss. And as we may fairly say that the light reflected backwards by the New Testament on the Old is a valid argument for the truth of the meaning which it then assumes, so in like manner we may say that the light which is shed upon the whole of Scripture by the Johannine conception of Christ, regarding it merely as

a conception, is so great as to warrant the inference that after all it may be the true one. With it the significance of all that has gone before is heightened to a tenfold degree, without it, we may truly say, it is pointless and incomplete. But as far as I am aware, the most reckless criticism has never dared to insinuate that the writer of the fourth Gospel whoever he was, conceived the design of thus putting the coping-stone to the edifice of Holy Scripture. For to do so would be suicidal ; it would imply an admission of a unity which is not admitted, and would not account for the construction of the edifice which was found to want, and yet was capable of bearing such a coping-stone. Besides, the entire absence of any such allusion in the writings of St. John to the other books of Scripture as would imply a design of this kind, is conclusive against the notion.

Again, St. John's conception of Jesus as the Life—the eternal Life—of man is one which cannot fail to influence our intelligence of the whole of Scripture. Read in the light of it, what a different aspect do the eschatological statements of the other Evangelists assume. Speaking as a man among men, Himself subject to the conditions of time, it is impossible but that our Lord must have spoken of His coming again in the way He is said to have done ; and having so spoken it is equally impossible but that He should have been misunderstood as He seems to have

been. But, if He really was that very eternal Being who had life in Himself and was the Life, it is no less plain that His words must be interpreted by the standard of His own eternal existence. And, interpreted by this standard, it is hardly possible to conceive the period of human history at which the coming of Christ may not still be future. All we know is that He is now in the fulness of His risen and ascended life, and that He is still to come; but may it not be the same at a period of ten thousand years from the present time? Supposing the present constitution of things to be still existing it cannot be otherwise. It is the eternal present which is the abode of Christ, and from that abode He is ever promising to come and ever coming; but the times and the seasons, though all-important to us, are of no importance to Him. He was once, and He spoke then of a "last day," but what He was once He is now; to Him the lapse of time between the present and the past, and that time which shall yet elapse between the final future and the present, is as nothing. The ages roll by, and their flight is not unmarked by mortal man, but to Him their passage is only like the passage of summer clouds across the sun which leave his brightness unobscured, his glory undiminished. If He truly *is*, and we are truly with Him, then He still says to us as He said to His own of old, "A little while and ye shall not see me, and

again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father." We may still ask, as some of His disciples asked among themselves, "What is this that he saith unto us?" and the only answer to be given is, "We cannot tell what he saith." But if He is Himself the very eternal Life it cannot be otherwise. That it is as it is can at once be explained on this supposition, and it is capable of explanation on no other. But had the writer of the fourth Gospel the very smallest conception that he was writing for a future of nearly two thousand years? Or did he really intend to furnish what was essentially the solution of questions which should then be asked? At any rate, would not the fact of his having done so tend to furnish something like conclusive evidence that his solution was the true one? For the same teaching, be it observed, would not only serve to explain the long delay with which the saints of old waited for the promises—how from the time when Abraham rejoiced to see His day until the dawning of it on the world was so many weary centuries—how, when the Old Testament dispensation was drawing to a close, the prophet Haggai could affirm, "It is a little while . . . and the desire of all nations shall come,"[6] and the last of

[6] Haggai ii. 6, 7. I retain this translation, notwithstanding certain recent attacks thereupon in Convocation and out of it, simply because I believe it to be the right one and that which is alone consistent with the context. The passage in ver. 6, 7, 8, and 9 is one prophecy; it will hardly be denied that ver. 9 *must* be

the prophets could say, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple,"[7]—but also help in some degree to reconcile the demands of science for inconceivable epochs of past time with the creative days of Genesis and the Decalogue; for what is eternity to man is only as time to God, and when God speaks of eternity to man He can only do so in human language, which is the language of time.[8] It is, moreover, obvious that many of the statements of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. James, receive great elucidation when viewed in the light of the Johannine testimony to Christ as the eternal life of man and the very incarnation of the Life of God which was in the beginning with God.

There is manifestly no composition of the New Testament in which the double aspect of the character of Christ is so clearly set forth as it is in the Gospel of St. John. Who can read our

Messianic; if, that is, it has any meaning at all; but if it is, ver. 7 *may* be so too; and it is most certainly more in accordance with the Hebrew idiom to find the immediate *subject* of the verb, with which it agrees, in the *nations* of that verse than in the *silver and the gold* of ver. 8. All Hebrew scholars are familiar with this construction, *e.g.* cf. Isa. xxii. 7; xxv. 3, &c., &c.

[7] Malachi iii. 1.

[8] I have much pleasure in referring here to Mr. George Warington's "Week of Creation, or the Cosmogony of Genesis considered in its relation to Modern Science." Macmillans, 1870. See especially p. 78. He has thrown much light on his subject, and has brought out some points in the Scripture narrative, which to me at least were new.

Lord's statements in the fifth and sixth chapters and not feel that provision is there made for an indefinite extension of time? The "resurrection" and the "last day" cannot fail to transport us to periods of indefinite remoteness. But these vague ideas of remote futurity are modified and held in check by His own words to Martha, whose language had implied the same, "I am the resurrection and the life," showing that He gathered up in His own Person all the mysteries of time and eternity—of life and death—of the present and the future—and by His reference to the "little while" in which He would come again to His disciples and receive them unto Himself—while the due remembrance of these facts may serve to correct the hasty judgment of those critics who would sever the last chapter from the others because of its allusion to the coming of Christ as possibly about to happen within the lifetime of the beloved disciple. The truth is, that the point of view from which the Gospel from first to last is written is that of Jesus as the central Life—the Being in whom life existed and exists as an unoriginated and indestructible attribute—an underived and inalienable prerogative—as He therefore who was and is and is to come, and is alive for evermore, to whom there is no past and no future, but one infinite and unmeasured present, an everlasting now.

Not that the Apostle John enunciated any new

truth; on the contrary, he gave fuller and more explicit utterance to a thought which is felt to underlie the whole of Scripture, but such utterance as makes it more intelligible and more complete. The language of the ninetieth Psalm is virtually the same as the language of St. John. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made, thou art God from everlasting, and world without end." How does this differ from, "Before Abraham was I am," or this last again from words spoken to Moses at the burning bush, without which our Lord's words cannot be understood, "I am that I am; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations?"

But there is no way in which the light of St. John's writings reveal to us his true place in Holy Scripture more clearly than in the illumination which they shed on the moral problems of our being and the existence of evil in the world. No one will care to dispute the statement that our position in this world is enveloped in obscurity. What we are? Whence we come? Whither we go? are questions which the wisest of mankind have not been able to answer, and to which even Scripture itself does not pretend to give us anything more than a partial answer. And yet, doubtless, this is practically a sufficient answer; for, according to St. John, our Lord says, "He that followeth

me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."[9] While elsewhere He also says, by way of explanation, "He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."[1] So that it is plain that He regarded His followers as in possession of a light which others had not, which could not elsewhere than in Him be had, but which was in itself sufficient for every need.

Now let us see how this was. According to St. John, our Lord clearly teaches us that He is Himself, in His own Person, the solution of the problems of humanity. That is to say, a sufficient practical solution will be found in Him. Scripture nowhere gives us a theoretical answer to our difficulties. It looks at facts as facts, and throws sufficient light thereon to enable us to deal with them as facts. It gives us no answer to the question why we were made; but, being made, it teaches us how to act. Now, St. John's revelation of Christ teaches us that He was our Maker, for it teaches us that in Him was the light by which we live. And it teaches us, moreover, that if we would make our life a deathless and eternal life, we must become united to Christ, our Maker, as we can alone become united by direct personal faith in Him. Now it is a matter of which the mere human reason can judge, that *if* Christ is our Maker it must be as the Apostle says. For man to know his Maker, and be united

[9] St. John viii. 12. [1] St. John xii. 35.

to Him, must be the life of man. The only question that can arise is, How can he know his Maker except He reveals Himself? Must not all knowledge without such revelation be nothing better than guess-work? The only question therefore that remains is, Whether or not Christ is the personal revelation of his Maker—the human manifestation of God. This is a question we should have had to determine even if St. John had not written. But, as he has put the distinct issue before us, we cannot refuse to determine it. And as the issue thus distinctly raised throws great light not only on other portions of the New Testament, but also on the Old—light which, being once cast on them, cannot be dispensed with—we are also bound to determine whether we are justified in rejecting it. Now given the existence of man in this world as an unexplained mystery which we are not required to solve, surely it does practically solve the chief problem of his being to find that he can have eternal life by believing in Jesus—surely it is a truth self-luminous and radiant amid the gross darkness of natural life to be told and to know that he can have the light of eternal life by walking with Jesus. The Person of Jesus as a manifested reality, and no less a reality now when we see Him no more, is itself a centre and source of the brightest light. To believe those words as spoken by Jesus is verily to walk no more in darkness, but to have the light

of life; and even if it could be proved that He did not speak them, yet to be assured on sufficient authority that they are as true as if He had spoken them, that authority being the confessed experience of all believers in all ages which has ratified and does continually ratify their truth, is itself a ground of confidence scarcely less secure. If there is a Person who is Himself the Truth, to be able to know that Person and to hold communion with Him by believing in Him, would obviously be a sufficient solution of the problem of existence, at least to those who were content to walk by faith and not by sight. It would at all events be a solution to which none other could be compared.

Now this is the solution which St. John's revelation of Jesus proposes, which illustrates and confirms the whole of Scripture, as well as being illustrated and confirmed by it; and it is a solution which may well be left to stand or fall on its own merits, and to challenge competition to the end of time. For here it must be observed, that Faith does not create the object of its adoration, but only supplies the medium of communication by which that object, supposing Him to exist, is able to reach and influence the creature. And this must equally be the case whosoever and whatsoever that object may be defined to be. The sole issue, therefore, still before us is, Whether or not Jesus is that object?

The absolute superiority of the method of solution thus proposed is seen moreover in this fact: That while it admits the development of the rational faculty in man to the utmost conceivable extent, it admits also of man's development to an infinite degree, and in a totally different direction, that, namely, of the unseen and the spiritual. It *adds*, therefore, something to the being of man by allowing the full and unrestrained development of an integral portion of his nature, whereas it is exactly this portion that is altogether repressed and stunted in its growth by that other method, based only upon positive and scientific demonstration, which, in our own day, presents itself in most direct antagonism to the method of Scripture as it can alone aspire to be substituted in its place.

Again, St. John's conception of Christ is that which throws the greatest possible, and, in its kind, the only light upon the dark problem of the existence of evil in the world. With the origin of evil Scripture indeed has nothing whatever to do, for it is a speculative and not a practical question; but for our conflict with evil Scripture either does provide us with adequate resources, or else it must be declared a failure and an imposition. The mystery of evil then consists in its permission by One whom we cannot but regard as infinitely wise and holy, and at the same time infinitely powerful. That evil should exist side by side with the unrestrained exercise of almighty

goodness, is a fact in the contemplation of which the human mind is utterly baffled and overwhelmed. That this evil should assume the various forms of moral obliquity, of physical suffering, of mental derangement, and of temporal calamity, and that we, without any concurrence or consent on our part should be subjected simultaneously or alternately to the pressure of one or all of these forms of evil, is a problem that may well stagger us, as it is oftentimes known to drive successively to the extreme of wretchedness, frivolity, despair. Now for the solution of this problem, which confronts us universally wherever we turn, positive science not only has discovered and can discover no single ray of hope, but is also totally powerless to assist us to grapple with it as a fact. But the revelation of Scripture, though it has sublimely refused to do the former, has triumphantly succeeded in accomplishing the latter. And how has it done so? It has given us a double or a fourfold picture, as we choose to regard it, of that Being who has constituted our position, as it is, surrounded by the pressure of evil independently of our will, Himself stooping voluntarily to direct and intimate participation in all the more terrible forms of evil to which we are ourselves exposed. It has exhibited Him oppressed by poverty, afflicted by hunger and thirst, assaulted by vehement temptation from within, exposed to relentless persecution from without,

encountered by hatred, malice, jealousy, bigotry, obstinacy, fury, duplicity, and the whole host of uncontrolled human passions, buffeted, reviled, spit upon, falsely accused, betrayed by His familiar and favoured friend, deserted by His trusted and beloved associates, despised and ridiculed by the great, spitefully entreated and scoffed at by the rabble, scourged and tortured by a brutal soldiery, crowned with a chaplet of thorns, and arrayed in a purple robe in solemn mockery of regal pomp, crucified with robbers who were allowed to taunt Him with impunity, suffered to hang naked and exhausted, hungry and athirst under the burning blaze of a noontide eastern sun, while coarse and ruffian mercenaries divided and gambled for His raiment, till at last the strength of a highly organised and sensitive nature gave way, and with one loud voice of agony, not unmingled with the taste of that spiritual death which consists in being forsaken of God, He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. It has exhibited Him pierced with a spear after death, as though the malice of His enemies would fain have pursued Him into the world unseen ; then taken down from the cross of shame and cruelty, for which our only corresponding equivalent is the gallows, and lastly consigned to the darkness and silence of the cold and solitary tomb. It has thus exhibited *God* as drinking to the very dregs the bitterness of that cup He has given man to

drink, of which man complains so bitterly, and drinking it in order that the cup which God had tasted might be made sweet to man. It has exhibited God as moving in the labyrinth of human circumstance just as we move in it with earthly relationships, social ties, moral obligations, accidental hindrances; exposed to the trial of bereavement, the pain of being misunderstood, misinterpreted, misjudged, confronted by the sickening spectacle of human depravity in a Tiberius, a Herod, or a Pilate, which from the conditions of His own true humanity He was destined to witness and to deal with, not to alter or prevent; subject to the necessity of prudential management and forethought, and yet open to the possibility of finding His designs, so far as they were merely personal and earthly, frustrated; constrained to pass through the ordeal of bending His own human will to compliance with an external will fully acknowledged as Divine, and yet perhaps in His human consciousness imperfectly known and understood.

Surely, then, the light which this exhibition of God throws upon our position as men who have to cope with evil, is adequate to our utmost want, if not to our full desire. For it shows us how He coped with the evil that is in the world who said to us, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."[2] It shows us that His

[2] St. John xvi. 33.

position was precisely ours, that He availed Himself of no superiority over us, that He did not attempt to control or alter circumstances in virtue of His superhuman power over man and nature, but set Himself resolutely to grapple with circumstances as He would have us grapple with them, thus shedding a Divine light on the darkness of our circumstances which we too feel ourselves powerless to control, and are frequently at a loss to meet. Had He altered His circumstances it would have shed no light on ours, unless it should please Him to alter ours also. The very difficulty for us arises from our circumstances being what they are ; if they were other than they are, we should have no difficulty. We know from long and sad experience that, while we are here, they cannot and will not be other than they are, but He has come among us who has shared them with us, and that which He has laid on us He has shown His perfect willingness to bear Himself.

Now, this is verily to break the yoke of evil from off our necks ; it is to snap asunder the staff of the oppressor, to bring in the blessings of redemption from the power of evil. It is not only a work that is worthy of God, but also a work that God alone could do. And, therefore, if St. John alone had spoken of Jesus as God, seeing that all the Evangelists are unanimous in representing Him as that Christ who should redeem, he would have been justified in doing so ; for re-

demption, to be worthy of the name, must be a redemption from the extremest forms of evil, such as sin and death, which could not possibly be accomplished by any one who was nothing more than man. Redemption effected by a being on the mere level of humanity would be no redemption at all, inasmuch as it would still leave death and sin accidents to which man alone was subject; but when we see these accidents submitted to by One who is Himself God, the galling pressure of their yoke is taken off us by being made to rest on Him. We are not left alone in our misery, but have God as our companion in it, who, for His own inscrutable reasons, has laid a burden on us, which He has at the same time spontaneously lightened by condescending, for our sakes, and for pure love of us, to bear it Himself. In the face, then, of such testimony to Christ as St. John has borne, we may not say, God would have displayed His love more clearly by not laying the burden on us at all, for,—independently of the fact that love such as this which stoops to sin and death for no object but to save the sinner, is manifestly deeper and more worthy of the name than a love which simply declines all contact with suffering and all knowledge of sin—to say so would be to commit the practical error of refusing to deal with the plain facts of existence as they come before us, and therefore to leave the painful burden of these

facts unalleviated. The Gospel of Christ, as presented by St. John, does indeed offer no solution to account theoretically for the facts, but it does offer a complete solution of the problem how to deal with them practically, for it opens out to us the Godhead in conflict with these facts, and proclaims His finished triumph over them. Rightly therefore was it reserved for this Evangelist to record the dying words of Jesus, "It is finished." For God so to enter into and to grapple with the extremest forms of evil, namely, death, and sin as the very sting of death, would be to solve the problem of man's existence in the midst of evil as a fact; it would be to complete that work of redemption which, if wrought out at all, must be wrought out by God, and which, if complete at all, would only be complete by His experience as a man of the root-evils to which man is exposed, and by His voluntary participation in them Himself.

And if "he that saw it bare record, and his record is true," we have on the one side the fact that death such as this would be complete redemption, and, on the other, the attested evidence that such a death actually did take place. It only remains, therefore, for us to decide whether the death of Jesus was the death of God as man, and upon the issue of that question, to decide whether humanity has been redeemed. For, if otherwise, not only is man's position as in the midst of evil,

and exposed to sin and death a problem unexplained, but also there is no prospect of deliverance for him from the sorest accidents of his condition over which he has no control.

But there is yet another side of this problem which is illuminated by the death of Jesus as the Son or Word of God according to the testimony of St. John, and that is the duration of evil and the prolonged continuance of sin and suffering in the world. Why is it permitted to last so long? Why is it not all nipped in the bud and not suffered to develop its baneful flower and its poisonous fruit, but allowed to go on sowing its deadly seed, and handing down its disastrous entail to the countless generations of humanity? We cannot tell, and we need not desire to ask. Our premises are strictly limited and defined. They are: Given the existence of sin, and suffering, and death in the world, for which we do not pretend to account; is there any adequate method of dealing with them, any sufficient hope of deliverance from them? Now the mystery of iniquity, and the whole problem of evil is concentred in its mere existence, and is entirely irrespective of its duration or extent. The evil of which we are conscious in ourselves is in no way increased by the knowledge that the same evil exists in others, it is rather diminished than increased thereby to us. This is seen by the sympathy that exists between persons who are afflicted by the same

maladies, or subject to the same infirmities, or suffering from the same misfortunes. The special form of evil in each case is not intensified but rather diminished by its multiplied repetition in others. The present evil and misery existing in the world is wholly unaffected by our knowledge that the same or a greater amount of it existed a thousand years ago, or will exist a thousand years to come. In every case the essence of evil is concentrated in its individual isolation. We do not of course deny that it is in the power of every individual to add to the evil already existing in himself or others, and that this fatal power of reproduction is eminently characteristic of evil—by no means, the reverse is manifestly the case—but the mystery of evil as far as we are ourselves concerned, consists in our own personal relation to and contact with it. That mystery is in no degree heightened, but rather the reverse, by the fact of its existence in numberless instances external to ourselves. And this mystery, as far as we are concerned, terminates with death ; death is itself part of the mystery as long as we survive, but it puts an end to the mystery when we die. The mystery is simply perpetuated in other subjects, and under varied conditions and altered circumstances, for the variety of individual relation to the same root principal of evil can be regarded as nothing less than infinite. But this perpetuation does not increase the mystery, for the mystery is

one and individual ; it is the *same* in every case, and the multiplicity of cases adds nothing whatever to the mystery. That sin and death exist at all is the puzzle, and not that existing as they do their dominion is so extended and so prolonged, for the whole problem of their mystery is felt to be concentred in the I, and the agony of this problem is only life-long. The stroke of death, every time it smites, carries home the solution of the mystery to one more of its perplexed and benighted subjects. And each successive generation of the family of man has to offer but the same and not a different problem to other subjects for whom it will in turn be solved.

Now it is this mystery of evil which confronts us that was voluntarily confronted by Jesus Christ, and He solved it for us on the Cross. If He was God, the ultimate author of death, it is plain that by stooping to die Himself He must have taken away the sting of death. He therefore solved that part of the mystery which consists in its pain. This he did for each, and at the same time did for all, and when His death is thus apprehended, the sting of death is felt to be destroyed, its essential evil is eradicated. If a being so great and glorious as the Lord of all has consented to die my death, then I can no more fear to die ; nay, death itself can no more be death to me, for in His death I find an ever failing source of life ; since by dying He has overcome death and brought life and im-

mortality to light. And as for the continuation of evil, that is a feature in it which exists only to myself and not to Him, for, as far as He is concerned, the present conflict with evil in the world is one which never existed before, because it is carried on in different subjects ; it is now in process of decision, and in every individual case will very shortly be decided. To our eyes who link the present to the past and the future to the present, the most conspicuous feature in the mystery is its *continuation ;* but this is one that is purely relative, and so far delusive. It has pleased God, for reasons we cannot fathom, that this problem should continually work itself out in fresh and different subjects ; there is no conceivable limit to the variety of the subjects, or of the conditions under which it is being wrought out, but after all the problem is intrinsically one and the same. It is we who differ, not the problem.

And hence it arises that the solution of this problem for one is the solution of it for all, for if the problem is one, so also is the solution. If in one single instance it has been solved, then it has been solved in all.

Now it is the declaration of Jesus Christ, or at any rate the testimony of His disciple concerning Him, that He, by dying, has wrought out the solution of this problem. In the first place He solved it for Himself, because in stooping to death He had the promise of eternal life, "Therefore

doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."[3] "And I know that his commandment is life everlasting."[4] Forasmuch as Jesus was truly man, He must have felt the weight and pressure of this mystery of evil no less than we do, but when He died that He might rise again, and by rising again effectually overcame the world by overcoming the root-evil that is in the world, He virtually solved the problem of the existence of evil as far as that problem affected Him personally, or affects us practically. For, having solved it in Himself and in His own consciousness, He solved it for all who can see and accept His solution. Because, if there is a solution of the mystery, it must be such a solution as this; and if there is a solution of the mystery, it can only take effect where the personal consciousness of the individual is identified with the consciousness of Him who solved it. A participation in the consciousness of Him who in His own case, had solved the mystery, would in each repeated instance *be* the solution of it.

Now this is the testimony of St. John to Christ; it remains for us to determine whether or not we will accept it. Participation in the revealed con-

[3] St. John x. 17, 18. [4] St. John xii. 50.

sciousness of Jesus Christ is complete salvation from the root-principle of evil, whether moral, physical, or spiritual, whether temporal or eternal. But it is obvious that the area in which this salvation operates can only be coextensive with participation in the consciousness of Him in whose person the evil that is in the world was overcome, the mystery of iniquity was solved.

It is plain, therefore, that the one condition required is belief in what the words attributed to our Lord declare, and not belief in the distinct and independent fact that the words reported were spoken by Him. The words are a witness to the reality of Him to whom they are ascribed, and they are a witness to nothing else, not to the accuracy of the narrator nor to his identity with St. John. Do we believe in the reality of Him to whom they are a witness? The writer of the fourth Gospel did. The words are the memorial, the abiding memorial of his testimony to Christ. They are the everlasting record of his personal experience. Have we accepted and believed his testimony, and thereby set our seal, as the Baptist declared in the case of Him to whom the testimony was borne, to the fact that God is true? This is, after all, the one question for this generation and for this age, as indeed it is for all generations and for all ages.

Now, it is plain that such a conception of God, and the work of God and of Jesus as the Word of

God, as St. John has given us, throws an amount of light on the rest of Scripture, which, being once thrown on it, cannot be dispensed with. Seen in this light, all the law, the prophets, and the psalms become bright and luminous to a degree that otherwise beyond all question they are not. "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord."[5] "I am the Lord your God which brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the Lord your God."[6] "Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words."[7] "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins."[8] "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee."[9] "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."[1] "The Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he."[2] "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."[3] "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

[5] Gen. xlix. 18. [6] Num. xv. 41. [7] Deut. xxxiii. 3.
[8] Isa. xliv. 25. [9] Isa. xlv. 22. [1] Isa. l. 6.
[2] Jer. xxxi. 11. [3] Hos. xiii. 14.

Therefore, my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope."[4] "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."[5] "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."[6] "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[7] It is obvious that there is a uniform spirit breathing through these and a thousand other passages in the Old and New Testaments, which, considering the difference in age, character, and circumstance of the various writers, is, to say the least, remarkable. They all seem to point to a central thought, and to meet in a single Person. That Person is undoubtedly Divine: it is not one whit less clear that He is also human. According to all the Evangelists, but pre-eminently according to St. John, a person claiming to be both was known upon earth, and conversant among men. If His claim is admitted, this unique phenomenon of Scripture is explained; for all the rays of holy Scripture converge in the Jesus of St. John as they converge in no one else. They find a unity and a meaning there which

[4] Ps. xvi. 8, 9. [5] Ps. cxxxviii. 2. [6] St. Matt. xi. 27.
[7] St. Matt. xxviii. 18, 20.

otherwise they lack; and yet this unity is precisely that feature which no man could have discovered, and which no man therefore could have supplied. The Evangelists do not claim this for themselves; but, in spite of all their differences and their likenesses, they combine in claiming it for Christ. This is their testimony to Him. This is the witness of St. John to Christ. There is no question about the meaning of the witness, or about its uniform agreement. But, from first to last, the one question is, whether or not we have received this witness, whether or not we will receive it. Redemption such as this is what we want. Redemption such as this the Scriptures promised. Redemption such as this has been given to the world. According to the writer of the fourth Gospel, be he who he may have been, Jesus of Nazareth was the Redeemer; for He was the incarnate Word of God, the anointed King of Israel, the Lamb of God who was slain to take away the sin of the world, and to bring in more abundantly the priceless gift of everlasting life. Shall we reject Him as a deceiver and a hypocrite, for that, on the evidence, we must also do, whether or not we surrender the fourth Gospel, or shall we acknowledge and adore Him as the Lord our God? If we reject Him, the unexplained unanimity of Holy Writ will testify against us; if we confess and adore Him, it is equally

certain that it will confirm the verdict of the Son of Man, and vindicate the wisdom of His precept, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of ME."

# APPENDIX

## NOTE A

### THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

### I.

THE question of the authorship of the fourth Gospel, as far as internal evidence is concerned, turns in a great degree upon the question whether or not the writer is identical with the eye-witness spoken of in xix. 35. The first lecture is based upon the supposition that he is. But the question is one that requires fuller discussion on its own merits. Let us assume then that an unknown author was writing this Gospel A.D. 150. What would be his object in saying, "He that saw it hath borne record and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true that ye might believe?" His object clearly would be to assume the air of credibility and to gain belief. He must have meant one of two things, either (1) That he was himself the person bearing record for whom he desired to pass; or (2) else that he had received the statement he made from one who had been an eye-witness, on whose authority he repeated it. The possibility of any other supposition is precluded, because it is evident that this verse is thrown in for the purpose of enhancing the value of the testimony given; so that even if the writer was

uttering an untruth in saying that he had this particular testimony from an eye-witness there can be no manner of doubt that whether true or false he intended to say so.[1]

Now, if he received the statement from an eye-witness, we may well believe the particular fact recorded, namely, the piercing of the side and the effusion of blood and water; but this is just one of those very points of which the credibility is denied. For here it is alleged that a later sacramental teaching is discoverable which can by no means be referred to the Apostle. We have, therefore, manifest proof that criticism of this kind is vitiated by the presence of a latent *petitio principii*. If the Gospel is Apostolic then this teaching, so far as the passage in question supports it, is Apostolic likewise. It is uncritical to decide beforehand that the teaching is not Apostolic, and then to say that the work which contains it cannot be. If the writer of the Gospel had this circumstance from an eye-witness, then surely on all principles of right criticism we are bound to believe it as a fact. At least it is certain that he not only believed it, but corroborated it also by his own professed testimony to the trust-worthiness of his

[1] There seem to be three, but only three, possible ways of understanding the verse in question, which are as follows :—

1. And he that saw it (the writer) hath borne record (now in the act of writing) and his (the writer's) record is true, and he (the writer) knoweth that he (the writer) saith true, &c.

2. And he that saw it (the eye-witness) hath borne record (to me, the writer) and his (the eye-witness's) record is true, and he (the writer) knoweth that he (the eye-witness) saith true, &c.

3. And he that saw it (the eye-witness) hath borne record (to me, the writer) and his (the eye-witness's) record is true, and he (the eye-witness) knoweth that he (the eye-witness) saith true, &c.

Of these interpretations the first or the third can stand, but not the second. The first is our own ; the third is Mr. Orr's ; the second is Dr. Davidson's, but we may say with confidence that few will prefer it.

informant; "and he (the writer) knoweth that he (the eye-witness) saith true."

We are then shut up to this inference, that the writer having given the testimony of an eye-witness (than which we can have none greater) confirms that testimony by the testimony of one who was on the supposition *not* an eye-witness. An unknown person, whom we can have no reason for believing, tells us that a person from whom he received a particular statement was thoroughly trust-worthy. How does this mend the matter, or help to substantiate the narrative in question, or therefore to realise the only conceivable object which the writer can have had in view? He merely tells us that his informant was trust-worthy, but if this was so we are surely bound to believe him. For if not, otherwise, we must say that the eye-witness was mistaken, and that the writer was mistaken, for if the eye-witness was mistaken the testimony of the writer to his trust-worthiness goes for nothing; or else that the eye-witness was a myth, and the asseveration of the writer a falsehood, in which case our respect for him as a writer vanishes altogether. We cannot possibly set any store by that author who first conjures up an eye-witness to vouch for his narrative and then tells us a lie to corroborate his testimony. On this hypothesis, then, the only legitimate conclusion is that the fourth Gospel is a romance. We can call it nothing else.

The difficulties, therefore, of this position lead us inevitably to adopt the alternative one, which is that the writer was himself the person bearing witness for whom he desired to pass. This is virtually shown by the whole context of the passage in question: "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it hath borne record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true,

that ye might believe. *For* these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced. And after this Joseph of Arimathea," &c. We do violence to the narrative by introducing a second person distinct from the narrator and of whom we have heard nothing before, at the thirty-fifth verse. It is plain that the personal opinions of the narrator, on the interpretation of Scripture, are interwoven with his narrative in such a way as to make him undistinguishable from the eye-witness. The two are clearly one, and the asseveration of v. 35 applies not only to that particular fact, but likewise to the surrounding incidents of the narrative. It is, indeed, difficult to see how any one can admit, as Dr. Davidson does, that the writer meant to pass for the beloved disciple, and yet deny that he meant to pass for the eye-witness of the piercing of the side. The distinction is clearly arbitrary. Whether or not the writer was the Apostle there can be no reasonable doubt that by the eye-witness was meant the Apostle, for it is distinctly said that he was present a little while before at v. 26. Mr. Pound has indeed shown with very strong probability that after the time indicated by this last verse St. John was absent with the mother of Jesus, but that having taken her to his own home he returned in time to witness the remaining incidents of the crucifixion which he has recorded. This absence accounts for the omission in his Gospel of any allusion to the revilings of the thieves and the mob.—"Story of the Gospels," i. 618. It may perhaps be safely said that few persons will care to distinguish between the beloved disciple and the eye-witness. They were doubtless one, and meant to be one by the writer, whether or not *he* was a different person. The question of authorship is at any rate entirely distinct, but,

in point of fact, there is no valid reason for concluding that the writer himself did not intend to pass for the eye-witness. He wrote and intended to write as though he had personally witnessed the incidents he has recorded as taking place at the crucifixion. We may fairly argue on the basis of this identity as is done in the first Lecture. And then the question arises how far this identity is compatible with the theory of a late authorship.

It may help us, moreover, to estimate rightly the meaning of "He that saw it bare record" to assume for a moment that the author was St. John. Then, on that supposition, can any reasonable doubt be entertained that by the eye-witness he meant himself? But, if on this supposition such an inference is unavoidable, is it any the less so when we assume that a writer in the second century wrote a work which he desired to pass for his? In that case we are surely warranted in saying that the writer pretended he had been an eye-witness. It is nothing better than a forlorn hope of criticism to affirm—as Davidson does, ii. 436—that "the author of the Gospel " indicates that he was not an eye-witness of the sufferings " of Jesus in xix. 35," in order to avoid the conclusions which must follow if he was.

The only places in the Gospel in which the writer makes any allusion to himself are—

(1.) ch. i. 14, "And we beheld His glory," &c.

(2.) xiii. 23. "Now, there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved."

(3.) xviii. 15, 16. "And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple," ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ ἄλλος, &c. "That disciple," ὁ μαθητὴς ἐκεῖνος, and "that other disciple," ὁ ἄλλος μαθητης.

(4.) xix. 26. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother

and the disciple standing by whom he loved," &c.

27. "The disciple" and "that disciple," ὁ μαθητής.

(5.) xix. 35. "And he that saw it hath borne record," &c.

(6.) xx. 2. "Then she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved," &c.

3. "That other disciple," ὁ ἄλλος μαθητής.

4. "The other disciple," „ „

8. "That other disciple," „ „

(7.) xxi. 20. "Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following," &c.

23. "That disciple," ὁ μαθητὴς ἐκεῖνος.

Now, there can be no reasonable cause to doubt that one and the same person is referred to in all these places, if we except (5). We see also that twice the word ἐκεῖνος is used in speaking of this person, a fact which bears on the use of the same word in xix. 35, κἀκεῖνος οἶδεν ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγει, and makes it still more probable that it is he also who is referred to there. The expression too, "knoweth that he saith true that ye might believe," must be taken together with the corresponding one at xx. 30, 31, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book, but these have been written that ye might believe," &c.—that is to say, have been written by one of the disciples in whose presence they were done. The similarity of expression in these two places can scarcely leave any moral doubt that the eye-witness and the beloved disciple are one, and that the claim to personal knowledge is everywhere advanced in the Gospel.

Now, then, we come to the attestation at the end, οὗτος ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ μαρτυρῶν . . . καὶ γράψας . . . . that is

to say, the beloved disciple is the person testifying, and the person writing. The witness is the writer. Surely the single article to the two participles shows this very plainly. It is difficult to see how otherwise the language can be interpreted, or how the writer, whoever he was, can be held blameless of, or at least not chargeable with, the desire and design of passing for the disciple whom Jesus loved. But who was he? The only possible clue we have to the answer to this question is, that he was clearly one of the disciples enumerated at xxi. 2. "There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas, called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of His disciples." All we can be sure of is, that he was not Simon Peter nor Thomas, but which of the other five he was, there is nothing whatever to show. He may have been Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, for a special reason is assigned why *he* should be beloved of Jesus, inasmuch as He had once addressed him, "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." But more than this we cannot tell. There is nothing but tradition to fall back upon, which, as every one knows, is uniform and unvarying.[2] We may here observe, by the way, that the special mention of Nathanael in this chapter, who is mentioned nowhere else in Scripture but in the first chapter, and the additional circumstance told us about him here, that he was of *Cana* in Galilee, in immediate connection with which he is at first introduced, though it is not there said that he belonged to that place—is a strong presumptive argument that the author of the last chapter was the author likewise of the first. The next and only other clue we can discover towards the identification of the

[2] The exception of the Alogi, a small and unimportant sect in Asia Minor, in the second century, who ascribed the Gospel to Cerinthus, scarcely needs special mention. They likewise rejected the Apocalypse.

beloved disciple is the fact that he would seem to be some one who was frequently a companion of Peter. Now, the two disciples most frequently associated with Peter, according to the other Gospels, were James and John, the sons of Zebedee. James, we know, could not have written this Gospel, Acts xii. 2, nor, therefore, have been the beloved disciple, and thus we are left to the choice of Nathanael and St. John. In St. John would doubtless be found those conditions requisite for the authorship of it. Being a close companion of our Lord, he would naturally be an eye-witness of many of the scenes of His life, and have that minute knowledge of particulars which is so often conspicuous in his Gospel. That Jesus had a special regard for him is shown by the testimony of the other Evangelists, according to whom he was on three several occasions selected as one of three favoured disciples chosen to an exceptional nearness to their Master, and on one occasion he is found associated alone with Peter (St. Luke xxii. 8). As, therefore, the authorship of the fourth Gospel cannot be ascribed to Peter or to James, it necessarily rests with John.

If it is only by a process such as this that we can approximately arrive at the author of the fourth Gospel, all must admit that it is in the highest degree improbable that in A.D. 150 a writer would deliberately set himself down to calculate the chances by which he could thus disguise his identity, in order the more successfully to recommend his supposed reconstruction of the Gospel; and yet if he desired to pass for an Apostle and eye-witness, and for some one particular Apostle and eye-witness, this is neither more nor less than he must have done. In short, the concomitant difficulties of the hypothesis show very plainly that it is untenable.

## II.

It may be as well to notice here some of those points in the fourth Gospel which are supposed to be internal indications of a sub-Apostolic date. Mr. Tayler says, "Fourth Gospel," p. 89, "No doubt, the doctrine of the Logos existed anterior to the apostolic age, but it was confined to the higher sphere of philosophical thought, and came into no direct contact with the popular mind." And, consequently, the supposed prominence of this doctrine in the fourth Gospel is insisted on as a proof of its late origin. But surely there has been too much made of this so-called Logos doctrine. The Logos of St. John is not the Philonian Logos, neither is the mention of it in the fourth Gospel so prominent as is assumed. The technical use of the expression is confined to some four places in the opening verses of the first chapter, and these are explained as fully and completely by reference to the Old Testament which had "come into direct contact with the popular mind" as by reference to Philo, and very much more so. Of the real idea of the Logos, as embodied in St. John, there is not a trace in Philo. It is the object of the Evangelist to emancipate his readers from the trammels of technical language, and thus his Gospel may, with much more propriety, be termed an explanation of the phrase "Logos" than a treatise on the technical notion. His object is to show what the Logos is rather than to discourse about the Logos as an entity in itself. Judged in this latter capacity, his work is an utter failure; but as a revelation of the *thing* Logos, or rather of the Person of the Logos, it is invaluable. It is to the Old Testament rather than to Philo that we must turn for illustration of the Apostolic Logos.

The same writer mentions the Johannine use of the

phrase "the Jews," and the expression in xii. 19, "Behold the world is gone after him" as tokens of a late origin, (Cf. xi. 48.) In the first case, the choice of expression would mainly be ruled by the persons for whom, in the first instance, the author wrote. If these were not Jews, it is reasonable to expect that the inhabitants of Judæa and Jerusalem would be called Jews, especially after the dissolution of the Jewish polity; they were at this time a people who had been, not a people that were. The use of κόσμος in xii. 19 is the use common in the Gospel; and, as was observed by Leopardi,[3] has its origin in the New Testament, and more especially in the writings of St. John. It is a use exactly corresponding to our modern usage of "the world;" and whether or not actually employed by the Pharisees in the case in point, may well have expressed their meaning with sufficient accuracy. It is, indeed, possible, from Mr. Tayler's point of view, that a later writer might, by an anachronism, insert such an expression here, but it is in itself most certainly no necessary indication of an anachronism, especially as it is found in connection with "certain Greeks that came up to worship at the feast," xii. 19, 20.

Another indication of this kind is found in the alleged early conversion of the Samaritans, iv. 40-42. This state-

[3] Opere ii. 168. Gesù Cristo fu il primo che distintamente additò agli uomini quel lodatore e precettore di tutte le virtù finte, detrattore e persecutore di tutte le vere; quell' avversario d'ogni grandezza intrinseca e veramente propria dell' uomo; derisore d'ogni sentimento alto, se non lo crede falso, d'ogni affetto dolce, se lo crede intimo; quello schiavo dei forti, tiranno dei deboli, odiatore degl' infelici; il quale esso Gesù Cristo dinotò col nome di mondo, che gli dura in tutte le lingue colte insino al presente. Questa idea generale che è di tanta verità, e che poscia è stata e sarà sempre di tanto uso, non credo che avanti quel tempo fosse nata ad altri, nè mi ricordo che si trovi, intendo dire sotto una voce unica o sotto una forma precisa, in alcun filosofo gentile.

ment is declared by Mr. Tayler to be wholly at variance with Matt. x. 5, Luke ix. 53, and still more with Acts viii. 5, where the twelve are forbidden to enter any city of the Samaritans, where the Samaritans refuse to receive Christ into one of their villages because His face was as though he would go to Jerusalem, and where we are told that Christ was first preached in Samaria by Philip. Now, here we must bear in mind—that it is only one particular city of the Samaritans, viz., Sychar, to which St. John refers; the incident happened early in our Lord's ministry (see Pound), before either of the other occasions; that at the time mentioned by St. Matthew there were not improbably special reasons for the injunction given, which was intended to be special and not general; that at the time alluded to by St. Luke, according to some, our Lord was on His way to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, a circumstance of itself calculated to rouse hostility in the minds of Samaritans (in all probability not those of Sychar) not otherwise favourably disposed to Christ; and lastly, that in the Acts the mission of Philip especially refers to *the city of Samaria*, and not to any one of the numerous cities or villages of the province. There is not necessarily here any discrepance whatever. We only require to know more than the several Evangelists have told us in order to see union and concord everywhere. The supplement of a variety of not improbable omissions, which, owing to the brevity of the narrative, we *must* supply, will make all clear.

There is, however, one remark about criticism of this kind which it seems by no means inappropriate to make. The principle which is the very essence of the method in vogue is a needless imputation of motives to the sacred writers. This, to say the least, is scarcely fair. Why is it not consistent with criticism to take their works as we find

them, and not try to exercise our ingenuity in discovering motives by which they may or may not have been actuated in writing them? The more so because, in almost every instance, the motive assumed is an evil rather than a good one. If the fourth Evangelist says that, in the opinion of the Pharisees, the world had gone after Christ, an expression which their known envy of Him might not unnaturally prompt, why are we to assume that he had a personal object in attributing this expression to the Pharisees, and still more, why are we to make this assumption—which cannot be shown to be anything more than an assumption—the basis of an attack against himself and his work? Now-a-days, in our own dealings between man and man, the practice of imputing motives is unanimously condemned. Why, then, if we reprobate the practice with living men, should we recognise and tolerate it in our dealings with those of whom we know less, but whom we have every reason to esteem as highly? Till criticism is purged of this baneful habit, we cannot hope for such results from it as are alone worthy of the name. It is criticism falsely so called.

Another passage discredited by Mr. Tayler is x. 8, of which he says that "if we call to mind the Jesus of the synoptical narratives, and the attitude uniformly assumed by him there towards the law and the prophets, we shall find it difficult to believe the words could ever, in their present unqualified harshness, have been uttered by him," p. 94. Surely there is no real difficulty concealed here. Our Lord is not speaking of those who followed the law and the prophets, but of those who opposed and rejected them. If we are to take the words as Mr. Tayler takes them, St. John is a witness against himself, for he had before recorded other words of Jesus, "Ye search the Scriptures, (that is to say, the law and the prophets), for

in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me." If he intended to draw the portrait of an inconsistent Christ, then he has done so; but if not, then we must weigh one passage against the other, and strike the balance between them.

Once more, the sacramental teaching of chap. vi. and xix. 34, is declared to be evidential of a doctrine which "was developed in the course of the second century," p. 95. It is said, "There is nothing mystical in the account of the Last Supper given by the three first evangelists, nor in the almost identical statement of Paul," 1 Cor. xi. 23, 25. And yet surely the teaching of the same Apostle in this same Epistle, which was one of his earliest, is after all virtually identical with that in St. John, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion of the blood* of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the *communion of the body* of Christ?" 1 Cor. x. 16. No language can be stronger than this, and it is remarkably consonant with, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," St. John vi. 53. It may reasonably be questioned whether the additional forty or fifty years in the life of the Church for which Mr. Tayler asks before the existence of the Gospel would be sufficient, being such years as they were, to allow of the development assumed, supposing that the doctrine in point had not been primitive. See also Mr. James Orr, *The Authenticity of John's Gospel*, p. 100 ff.

Lastly, the raising of Lazarus is declared to be the "greatest of all the miracles ascribed to Jesus," but it is evidently discredited because "the synoptists say not one word" about it, and "it is difficult to understand how they should have omitted all allusion to the extraordinary occurrence." The only explanation is the most obvious one that for some reason not assigned St. John was the only

one of the disciples who had personally witnessed it. The exhortation of Thomas, v. 16, "Let us also go that we may die with Him," was not improbably for prudential reasons overruled by our Lord, in literal accordance with His own words, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." John may have been His only companion, and having left His disciples at Ephraim, or having "directed them to meet Him there on His return from Bethany" (Pound), our Lord may have gone thither unaccompanied except by His chosen companion, the beloved disciple. If this was so, the whole thing is explained; we dare not reject the narrative as unhistorical because omissions are made which would explain it, or say that because it is one of the mystic number of seven miracles recorded by John, therefore it owes its origin to mysticism and is not worthy of credit. Surely, if the writer was the beloved disciple, he may oftentimes have been our Lord's only companion, a circumstance which will at once account for many peculiarities in his Gospel.

By the way, is it fair to say, with Mr. Tayler, p. 98, that the miracles of the fourth Gospel "are just seven in number?" Is not the "symmetrical disposal of them according to the mystic number seven" altogether dependent on an imaginary, not to say an arbitrary, arrangement? We have—

1. Turning water into wine, chap. ii.
2. Healing the nobleman's son, chap. iv.
3. Healing the impotent man, chap. v.
4. Feeding the five thousand, chap. vi.
5. Giving sight to the man born blind, chap. ix.
6. Raising of Lazarus, chap. xi.
7. Miraculous draught of fishes, chap. xxi.

This arrangement, it will be observed, not only makes

the last chapter an integral part of the Gospel, but also omits—

1. Our Lord's own resurrection, xx.
2. His seeing Nathanael under the fig-tree, i. 48.
3. His cleansing of the temple, prophesying His own resurrection, &c., ii. 19-23.
4. His telling the woman of Samaria, a stranger, that she had had five husbands, iv. 18.
5. His walking on the sea, vi. 19.
6. His detection of Judas, vi. 71.
7. His escape from the people, viii. 59.
8. His second escape, x. 39.
9. His knowledge of the death of Lazarus, xi. 14.
10. The allusions to miracles not recorded, xi. 47, and xii. 37.
11. The voice from heaven, xii. 28.
12. His detection of Judas, xiii. 26.
13. His prophecy of Peter's denial, xiii. 38.
14. His passing through the closed doors, xx. 19.
15. His knowledge of Thomas's unbelief, xx. 27.

All these incidents were more or less miraculous, and their occurrence in the Gospel at least shows that the "disposal" of the miracles "according to the mystic number seven" is fanciful, and consequently proves nothing as to the authorship of the work. Whatever else criticism of this kind proves, it conclusively shows that the standpoint of the critic is not that of the Evangelist. Whether that standpoint is right or wrong, it is clearly and confessedly not the same.[4]

Dr. Davidson finds traces of "an unapostolic writer"—in the mention of Bethany beyond Jordan, which he says "probably had no existence," though the writer again

[4] Mr. Orr has a remark somewhat similar to my own on this enumeration of Mr. Tayler, p. 41, n.

makes mention of this place at x. 40, showing his perfect acquaintance with it;—in the representation of the Messiah not as "the King of Israel:" in spite of Nathanael's confession, i. 49, cf. xviii. 33, xix. 19, &c.;—in the interpretation of Siloam by ἀπεσταλμένος: "An etymologising remark "at once trifling and incorrect, betrays a distant Gentile "writer," however this may be, it is quite in the manner of the Evangelist, *e.g.*, i. 38, 41, 42; xix. 13, 17; xx. 16; xxi. 2; and, as far as we can judge, his etymology is not incorrect;—in the assertion of the Jews that they were never in bondage to any man, forgetful of the Roman yoke, viii. 31, which may strike some as a very graphic touch of human nature, particularly as coming from those who had partially believed Christ, vi. 66;—in the gloss "making himself equal with God," v. 18, which "proceeds from a "writer attributing more than a Messianic sense to the "title—a metaphysical and later idea equivalent to that of "Logos," ii. p. 427–429. Whether these words proceed from the writer or not, they are simply consistent with the whole discourse, the purport of which remains sufficiently unmistakeable if they are omitted.

"In xii. 32-34, the multitude in Jerusalem take occasion, "from the words of Jesus, 'And I, if I be lifted up from "the earth, &c.,' to attribute to him the phrase *Son of man*, "which he did not employ. Probably the Jews refer to a "former conversation (iii. 14), but one which they did not "hear, that he held with Nicodemus. The evangelist has "put an unsuitable phrase into their mouth." This does not affect the question of authorship, because a late writer would probably endeavour to be accurate; but the reference really is to viii. 28, a speech which the Jews *did* hear.

"In vi. 36, Jesus, addressing the Jews in the synagogue "of Capernaum, speaks thus, 'But *I said unto you* that ye

" also have seen me and believe not.' Where do we find " him so addressing them? The only probable allusion is " to v. 37-44, though both language and scene are different " there, for the place was Jerusalem." The reference is to the previous verses, 26, 27, which are in effect equivalent to v. 36. "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed," *i.e.*, Ye saw me, and seek me because ye have seen me and received of my bounty, not because ye hunger after the true meat which is received only by faith. This is the obvious meaning, and is not by any means "far-fetched" as Alford says it is. In calling Simon the son of John, according to the better reading, Davidson asks, "Did the " writer suppose the two names Jonas and John to be " synonymous? So it would seem." Here again the question of authorship is not touched either way. It would be more remarkable that an author writing A.D. 150 should make such a mistake than that St. John should, if it be a mistake. Any how, it is of slight importance, and there are many obvious ways in which it may be explained. The change of name is preserved throughout the Gospel, cf. xxi. 15, 17, another indication of this last chapter being by the same hand.

The mention of Annas conjointly with Caiaphas is held by Dr. Davidson to be "scarcely compatible with the " authorship of a Palestinian Jew." To appreciate the force of this remark and those which follow it, the reader must refer to the narrative of the transaction in Mr. Pound's *Story of the Gospels*, i. 576, *seq.* ii. 436. The critic's remarks are self-destructive, because a fabricator writing at the time he supposes would be specially careful to agree with and not to

contradict existing records. It is obvious that there were two examinations, one before Annas, as St. John says, and one before Caiaphas, as the synoptists say, "For it would have been useless to have led Jesus to Annas after He had been to Caiaphas, whose judgment alone had the authority of the civil governor." Jesus by appealing to witnesses, v. 21, and "thus challenging Annas, who had no political authority, to proceed to the examination of witnesses, brought the present inquiry to an end," *therefore* he sent Him still *bound* to Caiaphas, which he would not have been "before a magisterial tribunal." Dr. Davidson asks if "Annas still retained his "title of office after he had been deposed?" . . . "why did not "Ishmael, Eleazar, and Simon, who were high priests after "Annas and before Caiaphas, bear the title still?" The probable answer is obvious, because in the elevation of Caiaphas to the high-priesthood a man was appointed who was willing that his father-in-law should be reinvested with a shadow of the authority he had enjoyed before. The same reason would not apply in the case of Ishmael, Eleazar, and Simon, who were not thus related to Caiaphas. They had held the office but a short time and had been deposed, and he did not care to associate them with himself in any of the sacerdotal functions. Annas, on the contrary, had been for many years high-priest and was his father-in-law.

Again, the explanation of the words "Destroy this temple," ii. 21, is declared to be "altogether improbable." "Christ did not refer to his body, and even if he did, he "must have pointed to it; whereas the apostles were "first led to the apprehension of the words by his "resurrection." It is not likely that they, any more than the other Jews, would have understood them before. If He did not refer to His body the words were meaningless; to what could He have referred? I have much pleasure

in drawing attention here to a very excellent work on our Lord's life and character, recently published anonymously under the title of "Judged by His Words," Longmans, 1870. See p. 22. The argument is original, though at the same time obvious when once suggested; it is very ably conducted, and conclusive in the impression it leaves.

Three instances are given in proof of the statement that "traditional reminiscences are sometimes inserted in im-"proper places," p. 431. The first is iv. 43-45. "*For* Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country," in which the writer is supposed to have mistaken Galilee in general for Nazareth. There is no occasion to refer the particle *for* "to the subsequent verse, as Tholuck takes it." Our Lord did not seek either publicity or popularity, He was gaining both, v. 1-3, *therefore* he went into Galilee.

The second is xiii. 20, where we are told "there is no proper connection between the words spoken and the context." Surely there is a very intimate connection. The Apostles needed to be assured that the treachery of Judas just detected would not invalidate the efficacy of their own mission, and *therefore* He said to them, "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me," &c.

The third is in the words, "Arise, let us go hence," xiv. 31, which are said to be "taken from Matthew and Mark, where we read, 'Arise, let us be going; behold he "is at hand that doth betray me.' The evangelist was "unwilling to lose words in harmony with his endeavour "to set forth the *voluntary* nature of the sufferings which "Jesus underwent. . . . . In the synoptic account, the "words belong to the scene in Gethsemane,—a scene incon-"sistent with the character of the fourth gospel. Soul "conflicts had too much of the human to suit a gospel "which describes the eternal Word. The omission of that "scene, coupled with the wish to retain the words before

" us, occasioned the present collocation."—Davidson ii. 452, after Strauss's Das Leben Jesu, pp. 554, 555, ed. 1864.

I must here again refer the reader to the narrative in Mr. Pound's work. The words, " Arise, let us go hence," applied to the departure from the supper-room at Bethany for Jerusalem, where our Lord was to eat the Passover with His disciples. They were therefore spoken some hours before the others in Matthew and Mark. That the fourth Evangelist did not consider " soul conflicts" unsuitable to his work, is proved by his alone recording the memorable words, xii. 27, 28. Cf. xvii. 1, 5. Criticism renounces her proper function when she exercises herself in discovering a writer's secret motives, instead of carefully noting his actual work. It may well be questioned whether, if *this* had been the Evangelist's real motive, it would have been apparent to one reader in a hundred thousand, and whether therefore the effect of his supposed device would have been accomplished.

Another indication of non-Palestinian origin discovered by Davidson is the writer's use of the word *Jews,* which seems to be that of a person " distant from their religion " and customs." If, according to tradition, he wrote at Ephesus, and for the *Christian* world, this need not surprise us. It is not, however, without considerable surprise that we read " in the synoptists, the Galileans are the warm adherents and friends of Jesus of Nazareth," ii. 433, when we remember,—" Woe unto thee, Chorazin ! woe unto thee, Bethsaida," &c. ; that at Nazareth they would have cast Him down headlong from the brow of the hill whereon their city was built ; that even " they were filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus," St. Luke vi. 11 ; that He was called " a gluttonous man and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners ;" and that, after one of His mighty

works, they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts, &c. ;—and when this is advanced as a proof of the injustice with which the same term *Jews* is indiscriminately applied to the Galileans as a name implying more or less of reproach, supposing such to be the case which it is not.

Not less striking is the statement that in the fourth Gospel the Jews "are never termed the 'people of God,' "but 'the nation,' (τὸ ἔθνος) a term which they applied "to the heathen."—*Ibid.* St. John says, i. 11, "He came unto *his own, and his own* received him not." Is not this tantamount to saying that Jews were the people of God? τὸ ἔθνος is only applied to the Jews on two occasions, once in xi. 48-52, "The Romans shall come and take away both our place and *nation*," &c. ; and once by Pilate in xviii. 35, "Thine own *nation* and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?" and it is difficult to say in either case what word would suit the context so well.

Surely it will be some time before any large body of intelligent people will throw up their belief in the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel on internal evidence so trivial and flimsy as this. The court of popular opinion, to which we may with perfect confidence appeal, will certainly return a verdict of "Not Proven": it can return no other.

## III.

After noticing these supposed internal indications of a later and non-Apostolic origin for the fourth Gospel, let us see if we can discover any internal indications of credibility or of Apostolic origin, and any undesigned coincidences or marks of correspondence, and of acquaintance with the other Gospels.

In the first place, as was remarked in Lecture VII., we find the same position and efficacy assigned to *Faith* in all the Gospels. "Thy faith hath saved thee." "He could there do no mighty work . . . and He marvelled because of their unbelief," correspond exactly to "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on His name" . . . "that whosoever *believeth* in Him should not perish," &c.

John the Baptist is introduced abruptly as a "man sent from God," without any direct mention of his office as the Baptist, but with a direct reference to his teaching elsewhere recorded. "This was he of whom I *spake*." When and where had he spoken, if not in the other Gospels? The man that wrote thus assumed acquaintance on the part of his readers with these Gospels.

St. Luke's narrative of the Baptist's preaching differs as much from that in St. Matthew and St. Mark as St. John's does from either, yet he expressly says, "And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people," by which we are prepared for the additional specimens of his doctrine which St. John has preserved.

In all the four Gospels John is represented as making the same reference to Isaiah—St. Matt. iii. 3, St. Mark i. 3, St. Luke iii. 4, St. John i. 23. In the second and third it is doubtful whether the Evangelist makes the quotation or attributes it to John, but it is the same quotation.

The special mention of the place Bethabara or Bethany, where John was baptising, which is peculiar to our Evangelist, is of a piece with the minuteness of him who, in the following verse, says, "*The next day* John seeth Jesus coming to him." This indicates the reminiscence of one who had been himself an actor in the scene, and probably a disciple of John's.

"And I knew him not," i. 31. Whatever difficulty

there may be in reconciling this with John's spontaneous confession in St. Matt. iii. 14, "I have need," &c., it is at least explained by St. Luke's narrative, i. 80, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his shewing unto Israel." Or he may have known Him personally and by character, and yet not known Him as the person to whom he had himself borne witness as the One to come, in which case his message is the more remarkable. But see also Mr. Pound's "Story of the Gospels," ii. 118.

In i. 45, our Lord is called "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph;" and in vi. 42 the Jews ask, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" The fourth Evangelist then agrees with the others in representing Jesus as the reputed son of earthly parents, though it has been remarked by Neander (quoted by Alford, loc. cit.), that by combining his two declarations that the "Word was made flesh," and that what is "born of the flesh is flesh," "we cannot escape the inference that a supernatural working of God in the conception of the man Christ Jesus is implied;" and at the same time St. Matthew and St. Luke are at one with him in saying, "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost," and "That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

St. John's has been called the Jerusalem Gospel; it is well, therefore, to observe that he represents our Lord's ministry as commencing in Galilee; that, according to him, His first miracle was wrought in Galilee; that the nobleman's son was healed in Galilee; that He lived with His mother, and His brethren, and His disciples, at any rate for a few days, at Capernaum, ii. 12; that, after having baptised with John in Jordan, He left Judea and departed *again* into Galilee; that, after healing the im-

potent man at Bethesda, He is again found in Galilee, vi. 1; that He was sought for in Capernaum, vi. 24; that He taught in the synagogue in Capernaum, probably on more than one occasion; that He had many disciples in Galilee, vi. 66; that He walked (habitually) in Galilee, in preference to Judæa, on account of the animosity of the Jews there, vii. 1; that He abode still in Galilee after He was urged by His brethren to go up to Jerusalem at a certain feast of tabernacles, vii. 9; that He was so identified with Galilee that the reproach was thrown at Nicodemus by some of the members of the Sanhedrim, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet?" vii. 52; that it was not improbably with reference to the same reproach that the Pharisees said, "We know that this man is a sinner," ix. 24, Cf. i. 46; that four at least of His disciples were of Galilee, namely, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, which implies a certain amount of habitual converse with Galilee, and that the title by which He was designated on the Cross was "Jesus of *Nazareth*, the king of the Jews." It is, therefore, by no means inconsistent with the previous tenor of the narrative when we read in the last chaper that the third manifestation of Christ to His disciples after the resurrection was "by the sea of Tiberias."

The miracle of turning water into wine at a marriage feast was certainly not inconsistent with the character of Him who was *called* a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber.

It is strange that any one not under the influence of strong bias can for a moment suppose that the act of cleansing the temple recorded in St. John ii. 15, can be the same with that of the synoptical Gospels. Mr. James Orr says, "Every candid critic will concur" with Mr. Tayler "as to the synoptical being the more probable place for this event in the history of Jesus," and he evidently thinks it mis-

placed in St. John, but a little consideration will show that the two events are distinct:—(1.) The scourge of small cords is peculiar to St. John; (2.) The driving out the sheep and the oxen, as well as those that trafficked in them, is peculiar to St. John; (3.) In St. John the Lord speaks only to those that sold doves; and (4.) the words He uses are not in any one of the other Gospels. Mr. Orr, however, has well observed, that this narrative both supplements and is supplemented by the others, for the accusation brought by the two false witnesses against Jesus was, "This fellow said, I am able to destoy the temple of God, and to build it in three days;" and that when on the Cross He was reviled, it was by those who wagged their heads, saying, "Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest in three days, save thyself."—*The Authenticity of John's Gospel*, p. 25. We are unable to follow him to his conclusion "that some such expression had been used by Jesus . . . . more recently than John leads us to suppose," for we believe that the Evangelists did not write without regard to chronological accuracy; but it does seem not at all improbable, that when St. Mark adds, "But neither so did their witness agree together," xiv. 59, he may have referred to a discrepance *in point of time*, some of the witnesses having spoken of a former occasion at our Lord's first passover, and some of a latter one at His last. We cannot regard St. John's narrative as "unlikely" with Mr. Orr, but rather take it as a striking instance of our Lord's moral power over men indicative of His real nature as something more than man.

The words of Christ recorded by St. John, "Except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God," are identical in teaching with other words recorded by St. Matthew, and spoken to His disciples, "Except *ye* be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Notice also the expression "kingdom of God," "kingdom of heaven." It is evident from the abrupt way in which this phrase is here introduced, that it had been used by Christ before. It was not possible that Nicodemus could have understood what our Lord said had the phrase not been familiar to him, and identified in some way with the teaching of the Teacher. Now, according to the other Gospels, this was the case. Jesus had begun His ministry with an announcement of the nearness of the kingdom of God. Nicodemus knew this, and consequently the discourse of Jesus went straight to the real subject-matter in hand, the nature and object of His own mission.

As instances of minute personal acquaintance on the part of the writer with the incidents he recorded, we may mention, "John also was baptising in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there. . . . . For John was not yet cast into prison," iii. 23, 24.

"Jesus himself baptised not, but his disciples," iv. 2.

"Then cometh he to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there." Cf. Gen. xxxiii. 19; xlviii. 22; Josh. xxiv. 32.

In St. John's narrative of feeding the five thousand, there are many particulars which mark an eye-witness; *e.g.*, the question of Jesus to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" while in the subjoined remark of the Evangelist, "This he said to prove him, for he himself knew what he would do," we see the observation of one who was intimately conversant with the habit of his Master's mind: *Philip's* reply, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may take a little:" "*One* of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here," &c.: "Now there was much grass in the place:" St. John

alone tells us *why* the fragments were taken up, because Jesus had said, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." St. John alone tells us *why* Jesus went up into a mountain to pray after this miracle; it was because He "perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king," knowing as before his Master's mind.

"So when they had rowed about *five and twenty or thirty furlongs*."

"For neither did his brethren believe in him," vii. 5.

"Now about the *midst of the feast*, Jesus went up into the temple and taught," vii. 14.

"*As Jesus passed by*, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay," ix. 1-6.

"And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple *in Solomon's Porch*," x. 22, 23.

"And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptised, and there he abode. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle; but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there," x. 40-42.

Surely the man who wrote thus must have been present with Jesus at the time.

Ch. xi. 2, is a clear reference to the other Gospels, for a writer would not in this way refer to a fact as well known, of which he had not himself as yet informed his readers, unless they might be supposed familiar with it from other sources.

The speech of Thomas, xi. 16, "Let us also go that we may die with him," is worthily recorded by him who subsequently related the story of his unbelief. We may add

also that the two anecdotes are appropriate to the same man, for daring devotion and obstinate unbelief may be, and not unfrequently are, characteristic of the same mind.

It is needless to make any reference to the 11th chapter, for it is so full of individual touches which mark the presence of an eye-witness that, to us, at least, it seems impossible to read it without perceiving them. Mr. Orr has very well pointed out the bearing of this chapter on the Synoptical Gospels in "The Portraits of the two Sisters," pp. 35-38 of his pamphlet before quoted.

It is worthy of observation that St. John twice over says of Mary, that she rose up *quickly*, (29, 31,) at the word of Jesus; this, although in direct contrast, is by no means inconsistent with the conduct of her who sat at "Jesus' feet and heard His words," but it is another delicate Johannine touch.

"Then took Mary *a pound* of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: *and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment,*" xii. 3.

"The same came therefore *to Philip*, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. *Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus,*" xii. 21, 22. This is the particularity of a person who had been present and remembered the circumstances; such minuteness is unaccountable in one romancing, except indeed on the supposition of an intentional deception with which the character of the writer cannot be reconciled.

It is evident, on looking at xvi. 33, xvii. 1, and xviii. 1, that the prayer of Jesus in xvii. was spoken in the presence of His disciples before His agony, and that His agony, as related by the synoptists, occurred between v. 1 and 2 of ch. xviii. *Why* the agony of Jesus is omitted by St. John

we cannot tell, except it was because he knew it had been recorded by others; the reason cannot be as alleged by some because he did not wish so to exhibit the eternal Logos, for had that been his reason he would not have written such passages as xii. 27, xi. 35, iv. 6, or xix. 28.

St. Matthew and St. Mark mention the fact of Peter's cutting off the *ear* of the high-priest's servant. St. Luke and St. John alone say that it was his *right* ear; but St. John adds "the servant's name was Malchus." Is this the remark of one who *knew*, or of one who was *fabricating?* If of one who knew, the reason is discovered in xviii. 15, where we are told that the "other disciple" was "known unto the high-priest, and" (because known) "went in with Jesus into the palace of the high-priest." This other disciple was evidently more or less at home in the high-priest's palace; he at any rate knew the high-priest and knew certain members of his household, for we find in the next verse that while Peter could not gain admission, the "other disciple" had only to speak to the damsel at the door in order to bring Peter in, and that one of the servants who said to Peter, "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" was related to Malchus. The narrator here is manifestly to be identified with the "other disciple." No other inference is possible; unless we assume that the servant's name, and the entrance of the "other disciple," and the relationship of the second servant to Malchus, are devices resorted to for the purpose of giving the narrative the air of verisimilitude; but even in that case the effect could only be produced by supposing the "other disciple" to be the informant. If the "other disciple" was not the historian, the historian must have had the incidents on the authority of the "other disciple," in which case the same remarks apply which have already been made in the

early part of this Note. Here is, at least, *Apostolic* authority for *these* incidents.

But now we come to another point. If the "other disciple" was St. John, is there any reason to believe that he was known to the high-priest? It is somewhat remarkable that a tradition of the second century has supplied us with an answer to this question, and that in a manner quite unexpected. Eusebius in two passages, iii. 32 and v. 24, quotes from a letter of Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, to Victor, Bishop of Rome, A.D. 192–201, in which he says, "Moreover, John, who rested on the bosom of our Lord, who was also a priest, and bore the sacerdotal plate (πέταλον) and was both martyr and teacher; he also rests at Ephesus." Critics have not known what to make of this πέταλον or plate of the priestly mitre inscribed "Holy to the Lord," but it seems not unreasonable to suppose with Mr. Orr, p. 45, "that he was somehow connected with the priestly office—that one of these golden plates had been in John's possession as an heir-loom," and that "the circumstance at least is worth considering, as tending to identify him with the 'disciple known to the high-priest.'" But what I wish to observe is this, that the statement of Polycrates cannot under any circumstances be referred for its origin to these words in the Gospel. He cannot have *intended* to illustrate them. And yet, if the tradition is worth anything, as it probably is, it does clearly show how St. John may have been not only known to the high-priest, but even possibly a distant relative. Suppose, therefore, the Gospel had been written A.D. 150, it is in the highest degree improbable that any such allusion would be made by the writer to a vague tradition of this kind, even if it existed or was generally known. As far as we can judge, the tradition serves to corroborate the Gospel, and the Gospel to confirm the tradition.

Precisely in the same way it is in the highest degree improbable that the tradition of St. John's lying on his Master's bosom and being the beloved disciple should have furnished the only ground for a writer in A.D. 150 to construct a fictitious Gospel upon, which was to pass for the work of that disciple. If John did lie on his Master's bosom and was the beloved disciple, then we can perhaps understand the tradition being preserved; only it is somewhat hard to reconcile even that tradition with what is otherwise told us of John; and indeed the same difficulty confronts us in the *fact* which is perceived in *theory* upon comparing the fourth Gospel portrait of John with that of the other three. But in reality it is far more probable that we are indebted to the Gospel for the tradition than to the tradition for the Gospel. And then, in that case, any allusion to either of these latter circumstances points us to the inference that the Gospel was known to the person by whom the allusion was made. Now there is no allusion to these circumstances in any writer earlier than A.D. 150, therefore we may reasonably conclude that the allusions which do exist owe their existence to an acquaintance with the Gospel, which in fact had been the means of preserving the tradition. It is in a very high degree improbable that the tradition would survive without the Gospel; there is no independent evidence of its having done so; but it is even more improbable still that the Gospel would be written to *fit* the tradition. The expression ὁ ἐπιστήθιος applied to St. John by later writers is only traceable to the influence of the Gospel. The preservation of the other tradition about the πέταλον can be understood on the supposition of an interest existing about St. John which the Gospel had created, but otherwise there is no reason why we should know more about that Apostle than we know of Simon Zelotes or Bartholomew. The alternative cannot too

forcibly be insisted upon, that if St. John's Gospel is not authentic it can be nothing else but a romance. It is impossible to account for the phenomena which do characterise it without admitting the supposition of a very subtle design, an endeavour to deceive, or, at any rate, to mislead.

In the last three chapters there are so many indications of the presence of an eye-witness that it is needless to specify them; *e.g.*, St. John alone mentions the Pavement or Gabbatha—that the title on the cross was read by many of the Jews—that the chief priests desired to alter it—that the *four* soldiers divided the garments of Jesus among them in four parts—that the coat was without seam woven from the top throughout—that this was why it was not divided—that His mother and other women were standing by the cross—that He consigned His mother to the keeping of the beloved disciple—that He said "I thirst" and "It is finished"—that "He bowed His head and gave up the ghost"—that His side was pierced—that Nicodemus took part in His burial, &c., &c.; these must be either the accurate reminiscences of an eye-witness, or they are the fabrications of a romancer. Can any one hesitate to decide which? It is the same with the narrative of the resurrection—taken merely as an independent narrative of an event we otherwise accept—is there any evidence that *this* narrative is unauthentic? Is not the visit of Peter and John, xx. 3-10, told in language so graphic and life-like that it cannot be the fictitious narrative of a true story, but if the story *about* which it is told is true it must be true likewise? And so with the appearance to Mary Magdalene and the episode of Thomas; it is in vain that we are asked to believe that these things are only true in the lessons they are designed to teach: our judgment, yea, our very nature, revolts against the insinuation and deter-

mines that they must be *facts*. And is it not the same with, "Cast the net on the *right* side of the ship," xxi. 6; Simon Peter girding his *fisher's coat* to him, the *two hundred* cubits, the *hundred and fifty and three* fishes, and the dialogue with Peter? It is very hard to believe that the man who wrote thus was romancing, and he was romancing if he pretended to be the person within whose cognisance the various incidents occurred, but was not.

It may be asked, however, what motive had the writer in concealing himself?[5] "Cur autem, quæso, nomen suum suppressit? Cur potissimum, cap. xxi, 20. in insignienda sua persona tot ambagibus usus, cur, v. 24. nomen suum non professus est? Nonne hoc venerando nomine addito maximam libro suo fecisset fidem?—Dicis fortasse, non opus erat, ut nomen profiteretur; omnes enim Ephesini et reliqui Asiæ Minoris bene sciebant, quis evangelii sit auctor, quis iste ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς, neque igitur necesse erat, ut libro fidem faceret. Quod si autem hoc fuisset, cur tandem historiæ suæ fidem tam sæpe et solemniter asseverasset? quid opus fuisset verborum v. c. cap. xix, 35. et similium? Joannes de fide, qua lectores evangelium, quod ab ipso scriptum scirent, accepturi essent, minime poterat esse dubius, nihilque ei hujus fidei gratia curandum fuisset nisi hoc, ut lectores scirent, *se* illud scripsisse,—igitur ut se auctorem nominaret, nomen suum profiteretur. Id vero ipsum est, quod non fecit; quo vero opus non fuisset, scl. asseveratione ἀξιοπιστιας, id fecit. Egit igitur ita, ut Joannes Apostolus haud dubie non egisset. Qua in re originis hujus libri apostolicæ fautores,

[5] The answer proposed by Dr. Oosterzee, "John's Gospel: Apologetic Lectures," Dr. Hurst's Translation, T. & T. Clark, 1869, p. 27. "Why should the Apostle have done what was not customary in his day?" seems hardly admissible when we bear in mind the Apocalypse and the Epistles of St. Paul.

nil quo auctorem defenderent protulerunt, nisi hoc, *modestiæ* esse, quod Joannes suum nomen nullo in loco professus sit. At ista apostoli modestia (si vel non urgeam, loca Luc. ix. 46-48, Marc. x, 35-41, Matt. x. 22, Luc. 51-55, illam minime probabilem facere) quo modo hic appareat, profecto non video." Bretschneider, Probabilia, iii. 19.

This is totally to misrepresent and to misunderstand the writer's motive. It was necessary that the things written should be sufficiently trustworthy to fulfil the purpose with which they were written; namely, that we might believe in Jesus, and believing have life through His name; but this object being secured the less the things written were identified with the person writing them, and the more the person writing them was kept out of sight, the better. This is the explanation of the whole matter. Surely it cannot be needful in writing for an English public to enlarge upon the advantages of anonymous composition.

For other marks of undesigned coincidence the reader is referred to Mr. Orr's pamphlet.

## IV.

Let us now inquire how far the accounts of the other Evangelists corroborate St. John, either in doctrine or in incident.

| St. Matt. iii. 11. | St. John i. 33. |
|---|---|
| He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. | The same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. |
| iv. 17. | iii. 3, to xviii. 33, xix. 19. |
| From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand: [and *passim* in the first three Gospels.] | Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God—enter into the kingom of God. Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. [Was there not an allusion here to His uniform teaching not otherwise recorded by St. John?] |

St. Matt. v. 17.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

St. John v.

Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

v. 28.

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

viii. 7.

He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her [the woman taken in adultery.]

The oft repeated "I say unto you" in the Sermon on the Mount is in keeping with the appellation bestowed on Christ by St. John, "The Word of God."

St. Matt. vi. 23.

If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.

St. John i. 9.

That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

vii. 22, 23.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

v. 22.

The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: . . . And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

vii. 28.

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

vii. 45, 46.

Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

v. 16, vii. 20, xii. 33, cf. xiii. 23.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. The tree is known by his fruit.

xv. 8.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

vii. 19.

Every tree that bringth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

xv. 2.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: . . . If a man abide not in me, he is cast

forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

St. Matt. vii. 7.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

St. John xvi. 23.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. . . . Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

The appeal to Scripture is the same in all the Evangelists. St. Mark has *ἵνα πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαί*, xiv. 49, once only, but cf. xv. 28. St. Luke, *δεῖ πληρωθῆναι πάντα*, xxiv. 44, cf. xxi. 22. St. Matthew and St. John, the frequent phrase *ἵνα πληρωθῇ*. This consentient view of the character and office of Holy Scripture is remarkable in writers so different as St. Matthew and St. John.

St. Matt. viii. 15.

And he touched her hand, and the fever left her.

St. John iv. 52.

Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

ix. 6, 7.

Then saith he to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose and departed to his house.

v. 8, 9.

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath.

ix. 15.

Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?

iii. 29.

The friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, *rejoiceth greatly* because of the bridegroom's voice.

ix. 18.

My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

iv. 47.

He went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

ix. 37, 38; xiii. 16, 17.

The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers

iv. 35-38.

Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit

into his harvest....Blessed are your eyes, for they see : and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see these things which ye see, and have not seen them ; and to hear these things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

St. Matt. x. 16, 22.

Behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves.

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

x. 17.

But beware of men : for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues ; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

[Spoken probably about two years before His death.]

x. 22.

He that endureth to the end shall be saved.

x. 24.

The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

x. 25.

If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much

unto life eternal : that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour ; other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

St. John xv. 16, 19.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you. [See St. Matt. x. 1 ; St. Mark iii. 13, 14 ; St. Luke vi. 13.]

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own ; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

xvi. 2, 4.

They shall put you out of the synagogues : yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. . . . And these things I said not unto you at the beginning because I was with you.

[However we may reconcile this last statement with that in St. Matthew, the apparent discrepance is one of which the writer must have been aware.]

Cf. Rev. ii. 10.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

xiii. 16 ; xv. 20.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord ; neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord.

viii. 48 ; vii. 20 ; x. 20.

Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan *and hast a devil?* [Had

more shall they call them of his household? [Not yet so called in St. Matt. Cf. xii. 24.]

St. Matt. x. 39 ; xvi. 25.

He that findeth his life shall lose it ; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

x. 40.

He that receiveth you, receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

x. 42.

Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, &c.

xi. 11.

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist : notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

xi. 27.

All things are delivered unto me of my Father : and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. [A distinct assertion of His Godhead.]

xi. 28.

Come unto me, all ye that labour, &c., for I am meek and lowly in heart, &c., and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

xi. 30.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

this any reference to His visit to Samaria, ch. iv. ?]

St. John xii. 25.

He that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.

xiii. 20.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Cf., The use of *τέκνια*, St. John xiii. 33, and of *παιδία*, xxi. 5.

v. 35.

He was a burning and a shining lamp : and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John.

iii. 35 ; xiv. 6 ; xvii. 2 ; x. 15.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father.

vi. 37, 38, 35.

Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Cf. 1 John v. 3.

And his commandments are not grievous.

| St. Matt. xii. 2. | St. John ix. 16. |
|---|---|
| But when the Pharisees saw it they said unto him, Behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day. | Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. |
| xii. 5. | x. 34; vii. 22, 23. |
| Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days, &c. | Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? &c.<br>Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, &c.; and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man, &c. |
| xii. 6, 8. | ii. 19–21. |
| But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day. [In these two places He unequivocally asserts His Deity.] | Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . But he spake of the temple of his body. |
| xii. 14. | x. 39, 40. |
| Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence. | Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand; and went away again beyond Jordan, &c., &c. |
| xii. 32, 41, 42. | viii. 52, 53, 58. |
| And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come. Behold, a greater than Jonas is here. Behold, a greater than Solomon is here. [This is self-assertion equal to that of the fourth Gospel, and only intelligible on the supposition of His Deity.] | Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. |
| xii. 49, 50. | xv. 14. |
| And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. | Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. |

| St. Matt. xiii. 10, 11. | St. John xiv. 22, 23. |
|---|---|
| Why speakest thou unto them in parables? . . . Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. | Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. |
| xiii. 14. | xii. 39, 40. |
| And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, &c.—Isa. vi. 9, 10. | Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded, &c.—Isa. vi. 9, 10. |
| xiii. 54. | vii. 14, 15. |
| And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? | Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? |
| xiii. 55. | vii. 27; vi. 42. |
| Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren. . . . And his sisters, are they not all with us? [Spoken in Capernaum.] | Howbeit we know this man whence he is. [Spoken in Jerusalem.]<br>And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? [Spoken in Capernaum.] Cf. ii. 12. |
| xv. 1. | vii. 1. |
| Then came to Jesus Scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusalem, saying, &c. [Why should they come from Jerusalem if He had not already been there, as the fourth Gospel says He had?] | After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. [This corresponds in time, after feeding five thousand, &c.] |
| xvi. 17. | vi. 44. |
| Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. | No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. . . . Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. [The teaching is identical, if the time and place are different.] |

| | |
|---|---|
| St. Matt. xvi. 19 ; xviii. 18. | St. John xx. 23. |
| Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever ye, &c. | Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. [The same remark applies.] |
| xvi. 24, 25 ; Cf. xix. 21. | xii. 25, 26. |
| If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it ; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then shall he reward every man according to his works. | He that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me let him follow me ; and where I am there shall also my servant be ; if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. |
| xvii. 4. | xiii. 8, 9 ; xxi. 7. |
| Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. | Thou shalt never wash my feet. . . . Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. . . . He girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. [Is not this the same man ?] |
| xviii. 11. | iii. 17 ; x. 10 ; xii. 47. |
| The Son of man is come to save that which was lost. | God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. |
| xviii. 14. | vi. 39. |
| Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. | This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. |
| xviii. 19. | xvi. 23. |
| If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. | Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. |

| | |
|---|---|
| St. Matt. xviii. 35. | St. John xv. 17. |
| So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. | These things I command you, that ye love one another. |
| xx. 27, 28. | xiii. 12–15; x. 11. |
| Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. | Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. |
| xxi. 4. | xii. 14. |
| All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, &c. | And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion, &c. |
| xxi. 33. | xv. 1. |
| There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, &c. | I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. |
| xxi. 43. | xi. 47, 48. |
| Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. | The chief priests and Pharisees . . . said . . . If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. |
| xxii. 29. | xx. 9. |
| Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures. | For as yet they knew not the Scriptures that he must, &c. |
| xxiii. | xii. 37. |
| [How is this terrible denunciation explained on the supposition of one visit only to Jerusalem?] | But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him. |
| xxv. 46. | v. 28, 29. |
| And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. | Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have |

St. Matt. xxvi. 38, 39.

My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. . . . O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ! nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

xxvi. 51.

And behold one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

xxvi. 55.

I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. [Was this only at the last visit to Jerusalem ?]

xxvii. 40, 42, 43.

If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. . . . He saved others, himself he cannot save. . . . He said I am the Son of God. Cf. xxvi. 63, 64.

xxviii. 1.

The first day of the week came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

xxviii. 7.

Behold, he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him.

done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

St. John xii. 27.

Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour. [Different in time and place, but identical in sentiment.]

xviii. 10.

Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. [Were these additions *invented ?*]

xi. 57.

Now, both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment that if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.

[We need only turn to passages such as these to see that the teaching of the first Gospel on these points is identical with that of the fourth. They cannot be understood without it.]

xx. 1.

Then she runneth . . . and saith, . . . They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and *we* know not where they have laid him.

xxi. 1.

After these things, Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias. [It is not called Galilee. Cf. vi. 23.]

A point of contrast between the second Gospel and the fourth is the frequent mention in the former of our Lord's miracles on unclean spirits, to which there is no allusion in the latter. The same may be said, indeed, to a certain

extent, of all the synoptical Gospels, and an inference might be drawn that the fourth Evangelist intentionally suppressed these allusions, were it not that the charge brought against our Lord, and the way it is met by him, are fatal to any such notion, vii. 20; viii. 48, 49, 52; x. 20, 21. This is an instance of the impossibility of arguing from omissions.

There are a few correspondences between St. Mark and St. John, besides those already collected from St. Matthew.

| St. Mark ii. 12. | St. John vi. 31; ix. 32. |
|---|---|
| We never saw it on this fashion. | When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. |
| ii. 28. | ix. 16. |
| Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath. | This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath-day. |
| iii. 21–30. | vii. 20. |
| And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him, for they said he is beside himself, ὅτι ἐξέστη. Because, they said, he hath an unclean spirit. | The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil, Δαιμόνιον ἔχεις. |
| iv. 33, 34. | xvi. 12, 25. |
| And with many such parables spake he the word unto them as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples. | I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. |
| v. 36; ix. 23. | xi. 40. |
| Be not afraid, only believe. If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. | Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest be the glory of God? |
| v. 39. | xi. 11, 14. |
| The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. | Our friend Lazarus sleepeth. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. |

| St. Mark vi. 4. | St. John iv. 44. |
|---|---|
| A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. | For Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. |
| vii. 34. | xi. 41 ; xvi. 1 ; xi. 33, 38. |
| And looking up to heaven he sighed, and saith, &c. | And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, &c. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, &c. He groaned in the spirit, &c. Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, &c. |
| ix. 1. | viii. 52. |
| There be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. | Thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. |
| xii. 13. | i. 21. |
| I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come. | Art thou Elias ? and he saith, I am not. |
| ix. 19. | xii. 35. |
| How long shall I be with you ? how long shall I suffer you ? | Yet a little while is the light with you, &c. |
| ix. 32. | xvi. 19 ; xxi. 12. |
| But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him. | Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, &c. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou, &c. |
| x. 18. | vi. 30. |
| Why callest thou me good ? there is none good but one, that is, God. | I can of mine own self do nothing. |
| x. 39. | xv. 21. |
| Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, &c. | All these things will they do unto you for my name sake, because they know not him that sent me. |
| xi. 18. | xi. 47, 48. |
| And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him, &c. They feared him because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. | What do we ? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him : and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. |
| xiii. 23. | xvi. 4. |
| But take ye heed ; behold I have foretold you all things. | These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. |

| St. Mark xiv. 14. | St. John xiii. 13. |
|---|---|
| The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, &c. | Ye call me Master and Lord. [The *Jewish* title Rabbi is used more frequently by St. John than by any other Evangelist; (it is not used at all by St. Luke;) this is worth noticing, as he is said to write as a *Gentile*.] |
| xiv. 36. | iv. 34; v. 30; vi. 38. |
| Nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. | My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. |
| xiv. 41. | ii. 4; xiii. 1. |
| It is enough: the hour is come. | Mine hour is not yet come. When Jesus knew that his hour was come. |
| xiv. 50. | xvi. 32. |
| And they all forsook him, and fled. | Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone. |
| xiv. 61, 62. | viii. 28. |
| Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. [This was our Lord's distinct public and judicial assertion of His Godhead, and at the same time His own interpretation of the phrase, Son of man.] | When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am he. |
| xiv. 70. | i. 44. |
| Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a *Galilean*. | Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and *Peter*. |
| xvi. 15. | xvii. 10; xx. 21. |
| Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. | As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. |
| xvi. 16. | iii. 36. |
| He that believeth and is baptised | He that believeth on the Son |

shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

The following are some of the parallelisms between St. Luke and St. John:—

St. Luke i. 3.

It seemed good to me also . . . to write . . . that thou mightest know the certainty, &c.

St. John xx. 31.

But these are written that ye might believe, &c.

i. 79.

To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to *guide our feet* into the way of peace.

viii. 12; xii. 46.

I am the light of the world: he that *followeth* me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. Cf. xvi. 33, That in me ye might have peace.

ii. 4.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David).

vii. 42.

Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was. [This is an indirect admission on the part of the fourth Evangelist, that these conditions were fulfilled in Jesus, as St. Luke says.]

ii. 19, 51.

Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

ii. 5.

His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

ii. 32.

A light to lighten the *Gentiles*, and the glory of thy people *Israel*.

i. 9.

That was the true light, which lighteth *every man* that cometh into the world.

ii. 35.

Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also.

xix. 25.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother.

ii. 47.

And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

vii. 15, 46.

And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

St. Luke ii. 48, 49.

Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, *thy father* and I have sought thee sorrowing. . . . How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about *my Father's* business?

ii. 50.

They understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

iii. 2.

Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests.

iii. 21, 22.

It came to pass, that Jesus also being baptised, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, &c.

iv. 6, 13.

All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, *he departed from him for a season.*

iv. 16.

As his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

iv. 22.

Is not this Joseph's son?

iv. 24.

Verily, I say unto you (Nazarenes), *no* prophet *is accepted* in his own country.

St. John ii. 4; ix. 4.

Woman, what have *I* to do with *thee?*

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day.

x. 6; xii. 16.

This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

xi. 49; xviii. 13.

And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year.

And led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

i. 33.

He that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.

xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11.

Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. *The prince of this world cometh,* and hath nothing in me. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

xviii. 20.

I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, &c.

vi. 42.

Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph?

iv. 45.

Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilæans *received* him. [Cf. *v.* 44, which also apparently contradicts it.]

St. Luke iv. 30.

But he passing through the midst of them went his way, and came down to Capernaum.

v. 4.

Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

v. 5.

We have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing.

v. 6.

And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

v. 16.

And he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed. Cf. vi. 12.

vi. 8.

But he knew their thoughts.

vi. 14.

Simon, whom he also named Peter.

vi. 22, 26.

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, &c. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you.

vii. 6.

Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof.

vii. 15.

And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak.

vii. 16.

They glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

St. John viii. 59.

But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

xxi. 6.

Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.

xxi. 3.

And that night they caught nothing.

They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes . . . yet was not the net broken.

vi. 15.

He departed again into a mountain himself alone.

xvi. 19.

Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him.

i. 42.

Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

xv. 19.

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

iv. 49.

The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

xi. 44.

And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, &c.

vii. 40.

Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ.

| St. Luke | St. John |
|---|---|
| vii. 23. | vi. 66. |
| Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. | From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. |
| vii. 34. | ii. 2 ; xii. 2. |
| The Son of man is come eating and drinking, &c. | And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. There they made him a supper. |
| ix. 32. | i. 14. |
| But Peter and they that were with him (James and *John*) were heavy with sleep : and when they were awake, they saw his glory. | And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. |
| ix. 48. | xii. 44. |
| Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me ; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me. | He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. [Cf. xiii. 20.] |
| ix. 52. | iv. 4, 8. |
| And sent messengers before his face, and they went and entered into a city of the Samaritans to make ready for him. | He must needs go through Samaria. His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat. |
| iv. 56. | iii. 17 ; xii. 47. |
| The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. | God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. |
| x. 16. | xiii. 20 ; v. 23. |
| He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me. | He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. |
| x. 40. | xii. 2. |
| But Martha was cumbered about much serving. | And Martha served. [See Mr. Orr's Pamphlet.] |
| xi. 17. | ii. 24, 25. |
| But he, knowing their thoughts. | He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew not what was in man. |

St. Luke xi. 26.

And the last state of that man is worse than the first.

xii. 4.

I say unto you, my friends.

xii. 32.

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

xii. 50.

I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.

xiii. 9.

And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

xiii. 14.

And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day.

xiii. 24.

Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

xiv. 22.

Lord, it is done, as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

xv. 17.

How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father.

xvi. 8.

The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the *children of light.*

St. John v. 14.

Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

xv. 14.

I have called you friends.

x. 29.

My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

xii. 27.

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

xv. 1, 2.

My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.

v. 16.

Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day.

x. 9; vii. 34.

I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.

xiv. 2.

In my Father's house are many mansions.

vi. 35.

I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger.

xii. 36.

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be *the children of light.* [This is thought to be a specially Johannine phrase.]

St. Luke xvi. 29.

They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them.

xvi. 31.

If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

xvii. 16, 11.

And he was a Samaritan. And it came to pass as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

xvii. 20 ; xix. 11.

The kingdom of God cometh not with *observation*, . . . because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

xviii. 34.

And they understood none of these things.

xix. 14.

His citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

xix. 41.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.

xix. 47.

And he taught daily in the temple.

xx. 9, 13, 14.

A certain man planted a vineyard. Then said the lord of the vineyard, . . . I will send my beloved son. . . . This is the heir.

xxi. 8.

Take heed that ye be not deceived : for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, &c.

xxi. 17.

And ye shall be hated of all men, for my name's sake.

St. John v. 39.

Search the scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me.

v. 46, 47.

Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me : for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

iv. 4.

And he must needs go through Samaria.

iii. 3.

Except a man be born from above, he cannot *see* the kingdom of God.

xii. 16.

These things understood not his disciples at the first.

i. 11.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But now have they both seen and hated both me and my father.

xi. 35.

Jesus wept.

xviii 20.

I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple.

xv. i.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.

v. 43.

I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not ; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

All these things will they do unto you, for my name's sake.

| St. Luke | St. John |
|---|---|
| xxi. 18. | x. 27. |
| But there shall not an hair of your head perish. | They shall never perish ; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. |
| xxii. 27. | xiii. 14, 15. |
| Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth ? Is not he that sitteth at meat ? but I am among you as he that serveth. | If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. |
| xxii. 32. | xvii. 9. |
| I have prayed for thee. | I pray for them, I pray not for the world. |
| xxii. 33. | |
| I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death. | Lord, why cannot I follow thee now ? I will lay down my life for thy sake. |
| xxii. 38. | xviii. 10. |
| Lord, Behold here are two swords. | Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it. |
| xxii. 53. | xii. 35. |
| This is your hour and the power of darkness. | Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you ; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. |
| xxiii. 41. | viii. 46. |
| This man hath done nothing amiss. | Which of you convinceth me of sin. |
| xxiv. 19. | iii. 2. |
| Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. | We know that thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him. |
| xxiv. 40. | xx. 20. |
| And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. | And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. |
| xxiv. 41. | xxi. 5. |
| Have ye here any meat ? | Children, have ye any meat ? |
| xxiv. 44, 45. | v. 35, 46 ; vi. 45 ; x. 34 ; xx. 9. |
| These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet | They are they which testify of me. He (Moses) wrote of me. It is |

with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures.

St. Luke xxiv. 48, 49.

And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.

xxiv. 51.

And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me. Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? [*i.e.*, Ps. lxxxii. 6.] For as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that he must rise again from the dead.

St. John xv. 26, 27.

When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me, and ye also shall bear witness.

xx. 17.

I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.

When we bear in mind that the difference between the fourth Gospel and the others, both in style and subject-matter, is obvious, it is certainly remarkable that there are so many traces of similarity of teaching and identity of thought between them as are here shown. It would be possible to bring forward additional instances, but these are noted as they occurred to me, and I have not been careful to omit those passages which presented a contrast rather than a correspondence in the narratives; so that, in a few cases, the conclusion may be drawn unfavourably to my general argument as well as in favour of it, or even against rather than for it. But it seems that we may fairly say that, great as is the apparent difference between the teaching of Christ in the fourth Gospel and His teaching in the others, there is after all a very real and substantial identity between them—an identity which is the more remarkable because it is to be discerned in spite of the difference, and is such as could not have been produced by any writer with the intention of giving to his work the

appearance of being a true record of Christ's teaching when compared with the earlier Gospels. The likeness, so far as it exists, is a genuine likeness, and can only be the result of adherence to truth; while the equally strong features of contrast must either be referred to the writer's own mind, or else must be taken as evidence of a wider and more varied kind of teaching on the part of Christ than we had been prepared to expect. Now, it is very certain that, though there are great similarities between the three first Gospels, there are also very great differences between them —differences not indeed so great as are apparent in the fourth Gospel, but still differences great enough to render it possible and even probable that a teaching which was capable of embracing the various modes represented by the synoptical Evangelists was not incapable of embracing the yet further variation of the fourth. The teaching in St. Luke is widely different from that in St. Mark—take, for instance, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus peculiar to St. Luke; the circumstantial narrative of the temptation in St. Luke, and the summary allusion to it in St. Mark; the narrative of healing the deaf and dumb, and the blind by a twofold action, recorded only by St. Mark vii. 32, viii. 22, and the very solemn verses at the close of ch. ix. not found elsewhere. The teaching in St. Matthew, again, is widely different from either: take, for instance, the parable of the ten virgins, or that of the separation of the sheep from the goats; or, in narrative, the visit of the wise men to Bethlehem. If these things are verities, they rest wholly on the testimony of individual men; and if the teaching is Christ's, it must be allowed to add considerably to the compass of that teaching as it is exhibited by the three Evangelists where they all agree. But this is to judge the powers of Christ by a merely human standard. When, however, we take into consideration the fact that

each of the three Evangelists evidently regarded Jesus as a Being who was more than man, and not man only, then we surely cannot demur to accepting another aspect of His teaching, ostensibly delivered under different circumstances, as being within the possible range and compass of His Divine powers, when we find that aspect presented to us by the fourth Evangelist. His narrative, simply on that ground, will certainly not be incredible. On the contrary, the very great minuteness of detail in narrative for which this Evangelist is remarkable, may lead us to expect a corresponding accuracy in the discourses he has ascribed to our Lord. At least there is a presumption against his having so far deviated from truth, as a superficial comparison of his narrative with those of others has led some critics to suppose.

It is also worthy of notice that the character of one who was intimately acquainted with the thoughts and intentions of his Lord's mind, to which the writer lays claim, is consistently maintained throughout. He often reveals to us the motives of his Master's actions, *e.g.* ii. 24, 25, "Jesus did not commit himself unto them, *because* he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he *knew what was in man*."

iv. 1. "When therefore the Lord *knew* how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptised more disciples than John, he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee."

iv. 43. "Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. *For* Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country."

v. 6. "When Jesus saw him lie, and *knew* that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?"

vi. 6. "And this he said to prove him: for he himself *knew* what he would do."

vi. 15. "When Jesus therefore *perceived* that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."

vi. 61. "When Jesus *knew in himself* that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?"

vi. 64. "Jesus *knew* from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him."

ix. 35. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

xii. 33. "This he said, signifying what death he should die."

xiii. 1, 3. "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus *knew* that his hour was come," &c. "Jesus *knowing* that the Father had given all things into his hands," &c.

xiii. 11. "For he *knew* who should betray him; *therefore* said he, Ye are not all clean."

xiii. 21. "When Jesus had thus said, he was *troubled in spirit*, and testified, and said," &c.

xvi. 19. "Now Jesus *knew* that they were desirous to ask him," &c.

xviii. 4. "Jesus therefore *knowing* all things that should come upon him," &c.

xviii. 9. "That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake," &c.

xviii. 32. "That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled," &c.

xix. 28. "After this, Jesus *knowing that* all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst."

xxi. 20. "This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God."

Now, there is no question but that these things do indicate in the writer a very intimate knowledge of the Lord's

mind; they are in keeping with the character of one who professed to be His intimate and beloved disciple; they are either the spontaneous expressions of one who was what he professed to be, or else they are the designed impersonations of such a character. Is it possible to hesitate upon the issue which is thus raised? For the only conceivable alternative is one which cannot for a moment be entertained—namely, that being written by one who was not the familiar disciple and companion of Christ, they, nevertheless, *undesignedly* and *accidentally*, were uttered in entire and minute agreement with the conditions of one who was. As therefore we cannot believe this, the fact of their occurrence constitutes an additional evidence in favour of the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel.

The impossibility, however, of the latter supposition is yet more apparent when we perceive that the feature now alluded to is characteristic of this writer, not only when he is speaking of our Lord, but also of others—*e.g.* viii. 9, "being *convicted* by their *own conscience*;" ix. 22, "These words spake his parents, *because they feared* the Jews;" xix. 8, "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more *afraid*;" xxi. 17, "Peter was *grieved*, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me?" and the like. It is the habit of this writer to depict the operations of the mind. He had an insight into character; but the way in which he speaks of our Lord's motives and feelings shows not only an acquaintance with character generally, but likewise an intimate acquaintance with the particular character he was depicting. His more intimate knowledge of the character of Christ gave him the wider scope for the exercise of his individual tendency as a writer. The fact that he speaks thus of others as well as Jesus, shows that, in speaking so of Him, he was spontaneously following the

bent of his own disposition, and not merely doing his best to impersonate the character of the beloved disciple.

## IV.

The chief difficulties which have been advanced against the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel are (1), its apparent contradictions to the synoptical Gospels in *narrative—e.g.* the mention of three or four passovers instead of one, and the Lord's frequent residence in Jerusalem; (2), its obvious difference in the *discourses* related, and the style of teaching attributed to Christ; and (3), the apparent discrepance in the day of our Lord's death, conjoined with the fact that the custom of celebrating Easter, ascribed by tradition to St. John himself, is at variance with the alleged teaching of the Gospel on this point.

(1). With respect to the first, we may refer the reader to the Apologetic Lectures of Dr. Oosterzee (T. &. T. Clark), and the pamphlet of Mr. Orr. It is evident that, though the synoptical Gospels do not mention, they necessarily imply a greater familiarity with Jerusalem, and a longer ministry to its inhabitants than the brief visit of the last Passover will account for; whether we consider the hatred manifested towards Christ, or the discourses spoken by Him. On the other hand, the fourth Gospel, though it places Christ constantly in Jerusalem, yet expressly mentions a period when it was not safe for Him to go there, and also speaks frequently of His Galilean ministry, as well as otherwise implying it.

(2). With respect to the second, the previous pages will have shown a very remarkable correspondence and substantial identity between the teaching of Christ, as recorded by the fourth Evangelist, and by each of the others, notwithstanding all apparent differences.

But (3), with respect to the third, a few words appear to be required.

It is affirmed that according to the synoptical Gospels the Passover took place on the 14th day of Nisan, the legal day, and the crucifixion on the 15th; but that according to St. John, the crucifixion took place on the 14th,—xviii. 28. "They themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, *but that they might eat the Passover*." "Had John described the paschal "supper," says Dr. Davidson, ii. 404, "he would have "placed it on the 13th of Nisan." "The synoptical 'pre- "paration-day' is not 'the preparation' of the fourth gospel "(xix. 14, 31, 42), but 'the preparation for the Sabbath,' "or Friday (Mark xv. 42; Luke xxiii. 54.) John's 'pre- "paration of the Passover' is 'the preparation for the "first passover-day, which was a sabbath. In other words, "the synoptists speak of the *weekly*, John of the *festival* "preparation. The ablest critics admit that there is an "irreconcilable difference between the synoptists and the "fourth gospel, in respect to the day on which Jesus "was crucified. . . . The Quartodeciman interpretation is "the only natural one. . . . This necessitates the conclu- "sion that the work was not written by an eye-witness "of all the transactions connected with the death of "Jesus."

It is clear from St. John that the 15th of Nisan was a Sabbath, "for that Sabbath-day was an high day," xix. 31, that is to say, it coincided with the first day of unleavened bread, Lev. xxiii. 5–8; it is also clear that our Lord was taken down from the cross that He might not remain there on the Sabbath, consequently the day on which He was crucified was, according to St. John, a Friday. It is also certain that this day is called by him "the preparation of the Passover," v. 14, "the preparation," v. 31, that

is to say, the Passover-day was also the preparation-day, or the eve, of the Sabbath. But St. Matthew says the same thing, "Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation," xxvii. 62, that is, after our Lord was laid in the tomb, and after 6 P.M. on Friday, the chief priests asked for and obtained from Pilate a watch to guard the sepulchre. This was done some time between 6 P.M. on Friday and 6 P.M. on Saturday, for it was done before the first day of the week, or Sunday. According, therefore, to St. Matthew, the day of the crucifixion was the Friday. But St. Mark says the same thing, xv. 42, "Now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathæa . . . came . . . and craved the body of Jesus," that is to say, according to St. Mark, Jesus was buried on the evening of the day before the Sabbath, that is, the evening of Friday, the day He was crucified. St. Luke is still more explicit, for he says, "and that day," the day He was crucified and buried "was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." So that according to all the Evangelists the Lord was crucified and buried on the 14th, or Passover preparation-day before the Sabbath, which that year coincided with the 15th of Nisan. If this were not so, and He ate the Passover with His disciples on the 14th, and was crucified on the 15th, that would make the Sabbath to fall on the 16th, in which case "that Sabbath-day" would not have been a "high day," as St. John says it was; for its being a "high day" was consequent upon its coincidence with the first and not with the second day of the feast of unleavened bread. The 15th and the 21st were "high" days, not the 16th. But when did the 14th of Nisan commence? Clearly at sunset on the Thursday. It was therefore *after* sunset on the Thursday that our Lord desired with desire to eat the Passover with His disciples before He suffered. It was *that night*, as Mr.

Orr says, of which He spake, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd," &c. When, therefore, the *day* of the 14th arrived, the shepherd was nailed to the cross, while as yet some among the Jews had not *eaten* the Passover, John xviii. 28;[6] and before that day closed, which was the Passover preparation-day preceding the Sabbath, He had bowed His head and given up the Ghost, probably at the very hour when those Jews would be eating the Passover. The only difficulty here is, that according to Josephus, Wars, vi. 9, 3, the Passover was eaten between the 9th and 11th hours, in which case we must suppose either that our Lord ate the Passover before the usual time, or else that there were *two* days on which the Passover might be eaten, according to variation in the Jewish kalendar. We believe not only that the legal phrase "between the two evenings," cf. Lev. xxiii. 32, admitted of our Lord's eating the Passover on the evening of Thursday, but that it gave a sanction, of which the Jews frequently availed themselves, to eat it at any time between sunset on Thursday and sunset on Friday. So that those Jews who went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled by entering a house that had leaven in it, had, in accordance with this sanction, not yet eaten the Passover. If, on the other hand, we prefer the supposition that the kalendar was liable to variation, this is a fact that has been fully proved by Cudworth.—Intellectual System, ii. 528, American edition. If the exigencies of our position allowed us to assume that the fourth Gospel was by an eye-witness, we

[6] To eat the Passover after midnight is said in the Mishna, Pesachim, x. 9, to "defile the hands;" but this may, perhaps, be taken as evidence that it was possible to eat it later. The Jews in question were about to do so. Their zeal against Jesus had caused them to defer it hitherto, and they would not further disqualify themselves for eating it by entering into the judgment-hall. Cf. also n. p. 330 post.

might infer with Alford (see note on Matt. xxvi. 17–19) that some Jews must have gone into the judgment-hall, and that they, therefore, had eaten the Passover, also that Joseph of Arimathæa in going to Pilate had done likewise; but at all events we may say that these circumstances are either inconsistences on the face of the narrative or else trifling indications of truth involving difficulties which the writer being conscious of truth did not care to explain.

The Bishop of Lincoln prefers the Patristic method of solving the difficulty, and supposes that the Priests and Pharisees were so eager to put Christ to death that they had delayed to eat the Passover; however it is to be explained, one thing is certain that even if St. John represented the crucifixion as taking place on the 14th of Nisan as affirmed, a supper on the previous evening, such as our Lord held, would not have fallen on the 13th. Mr. Pound has conclusively shown that the computation of the hours of the day in St. John's Gospel is the same as that used by the other Evangelists.—"Story of the Gospels," ii. 451.

Dr. Davidson says, ii. 403, "The synoptists intended to "express the fact that Jesus partook of the legal passover-"meal on the evening of the 14th of Nisan. Hence he was "crucified on the 15th, the day before the Jewish sabbath." This will make, according to the synoptists and Dr. Davidson,

14th, the Passover.
15th, the Crucifixion.
16th, the Sabbath.

Whereas we are also told just afterwards—"Thus instead "of the 15th of Nisan in the morning, we are brought by "the fourth gospel [xviii. 28] to the 14th of Nisan, and "there is a day's difference between the synoptists and "John."

This will make, according to St. John,

14th, the Crucifixion.
15th, the Sabbath.

Now, it is admitted that the 15th of Nisan was a Sabbath. But we find from the synoptists that our Lord was taken down from the cross and buried on the eve of the Sabbath, Mark xv. 42. Therefore, according to them also, He was crucified on the 14th, which makes a discrepance in *their* narrative upon this admission, and consequently we must allow either that the 15th was not a Sabbath, or that there is some other way of reconciling the two accounts. If the 15th was a Sabbath, then it is certain that the Evangelists agree in saying that the crucifixion took place the day before. Our choice lies, then, between leaving St. John's words, xviii. 28, unexplained, or insisting upon one explanation of them, which makes the other three narratives inconsistent with themselves. The solution proposed many years ago by Dr. S. Lee, of Cambridge, is at once the simplest and the most consonant with Scripture—that namely which interprets the phrase "between the two evenings," as including the space of the entire day—from evening to evening—Cf. Lev. xxiii. 32.[7]

The due consideration of this fact likewise explains another difficulty which Dr. Davidson puts thus, ii. 408, "The Christians of Asia Minor kept the paschal feast on "the 14th of Nisan, the same day in which Christ ate the

[7] The passage referred to by Dr. Lee in his Lexicon s. v. *gerev*, is as follows:—"The precept extended over the whole twenty-four hours comprehended within the two periods just named, as Sir John Marsham has well remarked (Chron. Ægypt., p. 185), and as it has been also remarked by an interlocutor in the Gemara, on the Jerusalem Talmud, published by Ugolinus in his "Thesaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum," in these words:—"Chananjah ben Jehuda dicit: Crederem tempus *inter vesperas*, inter vesperam quartæ decimæ, et vesperam decimæ quintæ comprehendi diem et noctem? . . . Post mediam noctem statim est legitimum: . . . vel manè

" lamb according to the synoptic gospels. In this they " appealed to apostolic tradition, and the example of John " himself. The fourth gospel is opposed to their view, for " it puts the crucifixion of Jesus on the 14th, so that his " last meal with the disciples must have been on the " 13th."

Now surely if the crucifixion occurred on the 14th, then our Lord must have eaten the Passover on the 14th also, for the previous night was part of the same day; and therefore the Quarto-decumans were quite right in appealing to the practice of St. John, so far as his practice was expressed or represented by the fourth Gospel. The same writer goes on to say, " It is equally strange that the " Roman church did not appeal to the fourth gospel, " which is on their side; as that the Asiatics adduced the " apostle's practice for a custom to which the gospel is " adverse." According to our view there is nothing at all strange in it, for the Gospel is in favour of and not adverse to the custom in point, and therefore we conclude that the Asiatic Christians, knowing the fourth Gospel to be St. John's, saw no discrepance between it and the practice they advocated. Consequently, the argument that is drawn from the prevailing Quarto-decuman practices of the Asiatics, in favour of which they appealed to the traditional authority of St. John, in order to prove that the fourth Gospel cannot have been by him seeing it discountenances that practice, utterly falls to the ground.

ita fiet?" &c.—Tom. xvii. p. DCCXCIV. And if this be the case, the phrase, between the two evenings, must be equivalent, or nearly so, to one used in Lev. xxiii. 32, and intended to designate precisely the same period."—Sermon on the Sabbath, p. 23. The former of these references given by Dr. Lee I have not been able to verify; the latter quotation is correct, and is most interesting and important. The passage occurs in Codex de Paschate Gemara Hierosolymitana illustratus nunc primum a Blasio Ugolino ex Hebraico Latine reddita. Venetiis, MDCCLV.

## V.

After having thus noticed the internal evidence to the authorship of the fourth Gospel, it only remains very briefly to refer to the body of external evidence existing in favour of it. This has recently been well put together in a small pamphlet by Mr. David Rowland, *The Evidence from Tradition and from the Fathers to the Apostolic Origin of the fourth Gospel.* Longmans, 1869.

Dr. Davidson, on the other side, has well summed up and examined the evidence from history and tradition in vol. ii. pp. 367–402; but it seems to us, upon the careful study of it, that the conclusion points in an exactly opposite direction to his. If the work in question was not the fourth Gospel, there can be little doubt but that this would be admitted. If a favourite theory had to be maintained, and this were the amount of evidence to be adduced in proof of it, there is no question whatever but that it would be considered to be conclusively established; as, on the contrary, an old belief has to be uprooted, all the positive evidence that does exist must be minimised and its worth depreciated. All that is not proved to demonstration must be regarded as not proved at all, and therefore doubtful.

Now it seems to us that Tischendorf is quite right in believing an acquaintance with the fourth Gospel to be evidenced in the Epistle of Barnabas, when it speaks, ch. xii., of Christ as typified by the brazen serpent of Moses. When we bear in mind that the one solitary allusion to that episode of the Exodus in the whole of the canonical Scriptures is found in St. John iii., we may at least think it significant that the same allusion is found here. The passages in the Epistles of Ignatius to the

Romans and Philadelphians are certainly not conclusive, but they are at least very remarkable if, being so similar as they are to the language of St. John, they were written in ignorance of that language: "I wish for the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ the Son of God, who in the last time has been made of the seed of David and Abraham, and I wish for the drink of God, his blood, which is incorruptible love and perennial life," Rom. vii. And, again, "For if, even according to the flesh, some wished to deceive me, yet the spirit being from God is not deceived. For he knows whence he comes and whither he goes, and makes hidden things manifest." *οἶδεν γαρ, πόθεν ἔρχεται, καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγει καὶ τὰ κρυπτὰ ἐλέγχει* (Philadelphians vii.) The very words of St. John, be it observed, in iii. 8, xvi. 8. It is not, however, to isolated passages that we need confine our appeal. It is difficult to read these letters of Ignatius and not perceive in them frequent evidence of an acquaintance with the Johannine writings, as well as with the Pauline Epistles. The latter perhaps few would care to dispute, but the former is scarcely less certain. We cannot expect to find the same sort of reference that is found in later authors, but the question is, whether there are not traces of a mode of thought which is substantially identical with that of the fourth Gospel, and, whether being so, it was not derived from it. To the oldest Ignatian Epistles Davidson himself assigns a date of about A.D. 165 (ii. 369). If, then, in these there is evidence of an acquaintance with the thought and language of the fourth Gospel, it is proof positive that the writer regarded that Gospel as genuine. It is quite beyond the bounds of probability to suppose both that the Ignatian letters are forgeries, and that being so they contained allusions to a forged Gospel, the very language of which they borrowed; for that the language

is borrowed, or rather perhaps spontaneously adopted, even on this supposition we cannot doubt. Under any circumstances the thought and language in both must have had a common origin. But that origin being the fourth Gospel, and there is no other to which we can point, it is a very strong presumptive evidence of its Apostolic authority. Cf. Ignat. ad. Eph. iii. and St. John xv. 5, xiv. 9; iv. and St. John xvii. 21; xvii. and St. John xii. 7. Ad Magnesios vi. and St. John i. 1; vii. and St. John v. 17, 30; viii. and St. John i. 18. Christ is here called Λόγος ἀΐδιος. Ad Tralianos viii. and St. John vi. 35. Ad Philadel. ix. and St. John x. 7, 9. Ad Smyrn. iii. and St. John xxi. 13; iv. and St John xvii. 3, &c. &c.

To pass on to Justin Martyr's first apology, A.D. 147. Few persons probably will be persuaded that the most obvious inference from such words as the following is, that the writer was not acquainted with the fourth Gospel:— "For Christ himself said, Unless ye be regenerated, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. And that it is impossible for such as have been once born to enter the wombs of their mothers, is manifest to all" (61). The slight departures from the precise Johannine phraseology in this passage surely go to show not ignorance of, but the greater familiarity with, the words of Christ. It was the doctrine and the sentiment that the writer borrowed, not the language. And the juxtaposition of the two consecutive clauses is almost conclusive proof that he had in his mind a corresponding passage in which the same two thoughts were combined. It is only special pleading to attempt to prove the contrary. If we *knew* that St. John's Gospel was then in existence, we should not for a moment doubt that it was quoted here. May not such apparent quotation therefore be accepted as evidence that it did exist? Again, in the Dialogue with Trypho, c. 63, "As

His blood did not arise from human seed, but from the will of God." The similarity here to St. John i. 13, is too close to allow us to regard it as a mere casualty. What direct appeal he could make to the New Testament in arguing with a Jew (Davidson ii. 376) is by no means clear.

Now it must be borne in mind that if there is any allusion to the fourth Gospel in these and similar passages, it places that Gospel in a very marked and definite position as a work which had been widely read and was commonly recognised—the only question is whether or not the allusions are allusions, and no man living can decide *that*—it is a simple matter of judgment, which must depend, in a great degree, upon individual bias or temperament.

But when we find on all hands that a clear and express citation is allowed in Theophilus of Antioch, A.D. 180, by whom the opening words of the fourth Gospel are quoted and ascribed to St. John, we may reasonably ask, Is it likely that a work which had not been written more than thirty years before, would in so short a time not only have established its claim to be considered Apostolic, but also have been commonly regarded and recognised as Holy Scripture, (for the quotation by Theophilus implies this common recognition), if its claims to be so considered were as groundless as we are asked to believe? Surely the adoption of Johannine language by Justin, about thirty years before, goes some way towards supplying that link in the evidence which we want between A.D 100 or 110 and 180. At the latter date we are sure of our position, but that very security implies an earlier foundation for it to rest on; for if such foundation did not exist, our position would not be so secure as it is. Supposing, then, that there are indications in Justin and Ignatius of acquaintance with the fourth Gospel, we have traces of that very

foundation which, it is obvious, must have existed. And be it observed, further, that one manifest allusion to the fourth Gospel at A.D. 140, is as good as a hundred, for all we want to prove is that at such a date it was sufficiently known and prominent to be referred to by Christian writers, and sufficiently familiar to the Christian community to be recognised when referred to. And one such acknowledged allusion is sufficient to prove *that*. The fact that more allusions were not made, or that being made they were not more explicit, can furnish no argument in contradiction of such positive evidence as does exist.[8]

## NOTE B.

### THE INTEGRITY OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

The two passages that have been disputed are the last chapter, and the narrative of the woman taken in adultery, vii. 53, viii. 1–11. With regard to the twenty-first chapter several reasons have been advanced by Dr. Davidson to show that it is a supplement which did not proceed from the writer of the Gospel. These reasons, however, seem to be those of a person who had made up his mind that such was the case, rather than of one who had been led by them to that conclusion.—ii. 454–457.

"1. The gospel concludes with the 20th chapter, as the "last two verses prove. Is it likely that the author would "resume his pen? If he did he would have removed "these verses."

[8] The idea that some one common source existed, and that source a written one, to which all Christians commonly appealed, and from which our present Gospels were derived, is too imaginary to be entertained.

That is to say, Dr. Davidson would have done so. More than this it does not prove. The question of likelihood is foreclosed by the existing fact, which we may assume provisionally to be a fact, with as much propriety as we may assume the contrary. Is it *likely* that a person intending to supplement another's work would have added on the supplement so clumsily? It is obvious that the writer claims identity with the disciple before mentioned, xxi. 24. If chap. xxi. is an addition, the inference would rather be that the former chapters were the work of St. John, or at least of "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

"2. The commencement of the 21st chapter, 'After "these things,' &c. &c., is unsuitable to the last two verses "of the 20th, whose contents reject the reference of 'these "things' to them. The pronoun rendered 'these things' "can only allude to the twenty-sixth and twenty-ninth "verses of the 20th chapter, which is so awkward as to "show a different writer for the 21st, who did not wish to "alter the conclusion of the work in xx. 30, 31."

The same awkwardness is manifest elsewhere among the sacred writers, where there can be no suspicion of diversity of authorship, *e.g.* at the end of Job xxxi., and at the end of 2 Cor. xi. It is conceivable that the same writer might add chap. xxi. as an afterthought, even though he had previously written xx. 30, 31, expressive of the general tenor of his work. Cf. 1 Tim. v. 22–24.

"3. The twenty-fourth verse, which is copied from xix. "35, betrays, in the use of the plural *we* know, the distinct- "ness of the writer from the evangelist. Or if the plural "stand simply for the singular, what is the meaning of a "writer saying at the same time of himself, 'The disciple "that wrote these things,' and 'We know that his testi- "mony is true?' Besides, the phrases, 'testify of these "things,' 'wrote these things,' apparently refer to the pre-

"ceding work, to chapters i.–xx., which is an unsuitable "allusion for a simple pronoun to bear. If it be thought "that the 'these things' of xxi. 24, include the 21st "chapter also because of the commencing words of xxi. 25, "'There are also other things,' we admit the reference; "but the assignment of the additional chapter to the "apostle's attestation is awkward, and merely imitated "from the preceding writer."

In Ecclesiastes we find the same phenomena as in the fourth Gospel, viz., the use of the third person singular and the first person singular and plural. Whatever may be thought of the authorship of Ecclesiastes, its integrity cannot be questioned. If, then, a parallel case can be produced, it is useless arguing from the phenomena of the last Gospel, when in that parallel case the like inference does not hold good. Whatever may be our opinion about the method of writing adopted in the Gospel, certain it is that we find precisely the same method adopted in another work with which the author of the Gospel must have been familiar. This fact remains whether we decide that both productions are spurious or both genuine.

According to our theory the author of the Gospel has commonly spoken of himself in the third person; he has, however, some two or three times made use of the first person plural, and once only of the first person singular, in the concluding words of his work. The author of Ecclesiastes in like manner commonly, or at least frequently, speaks of himself in the third person. It is the way in which he begins when introducing his subject, and he subsequently reverts to it; but he shortly afterwards throws off the third person and speaks in the first, clearly showing that he wishes to be identified with that particular person whom he calls the Preacher, and this he does continually; once only, however, like the fourth Evangelist, towards

the end of his work, he uses the first person plural, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter." The *us* here of course refers to the readers as well as to the writer, and therefore must not be pressed as though the cases were exactly parallel. It is not pretended that they are; but still it is singular that in *form* there is an exact similarity between the language of the two writers in speaking of themselves. What one has clearly done the other certainly *may* have done likewise. In Ecclesiastes, "Let us hear," may of course be "hath been heard;" but few probably would prefer that rendering.

Now, the position of Dr. Davidson is this—1. That the first twenty chapters were not written by St. John. 2 That the twenty-first chapter was written by some one else who had not written the first twenty. Then, if this be so, what follows ?—That this second writer authoritatively asserted that the first twenty chapters were the work of the disciple whom Jesus loved. He must have had reasons for knowing this, or else reasons for asserting it. If he had reasons for knowing this, then we have sufficient reason for believing him. If he had reasons for asserting it, then there can be no doubt but that he intended to pass off the twenty-first chapter under cover of the previous chapters, in which case as a writer claiming identity with the former writer, he becomes fairly chargeable with the same awkwardness that attaches to the Apostle who on the common supposition resumed his pen to make an addition to a work he had already concluded. For the hypothesis is not tenable, that the bulk of the Gospel not being written by St. John, the last chapter was written by a third person, who did not pretend to be identical either with that second unknown person or with the Apostle John.

If a "Jewish Christian before the end of the second cen-

tury wrote the supplement," it shows that at that time such a person believed a work written only fifty years before to be Apostolic, and succeeded in perpetuating the belief; or else that, knowing it to be otherwise, he lent the weight of whatever influence he had to prove it so. And there is no other alternative.

"4. After the 20th chapter none could have expected "from the same writer a third appearance of the risen "Jesus; since we read in the thirtieth verse that many "other *proofs* (σημεῖα) of his resurrection had been given "to the disciples, which are not in the present book. Could "the author therefore record another?"

It is sufficient to say that *some* author *has* recorded it, and whoever he was, whether the same or a different writer, he laboured under the particular difficulty here implied, because that which would have prevented him from writing thus would have prevented him also from making this addition to what was already written.

It is, moreover, worthy of observation that the alternate use of the first person singular and plural is characteristic also of the three Epistles of St. John.

"5. The discourse between Peter and Jesus is essentially "different from that held with Thomas, because it descends "to individual relations and circumstances, without pass- "ing into general ideas after the evangelist's manner."

Are the two discourses so different that the same man could not have held them with different persons, and if they are not, why cannot one and the same person have recorded them if they were held?

"6. 'The sons of Zebedee' in the second verse, is the "language of the synopists, not of the fourth gospel. And "Peter is asigned a pre-eminence which the whole work "intentionally ignores. The beloved disciple is also de- "scribed as a fisherman, a fact omitted by the evangelist,

" who represents him as a person of distinction, and " appears to transfer his abode from Galilee to Jeru- " salem."

The general assumption is made that the fourth Gospel is not Apostolic, chiefly on the ground of its diversity from the others, and then this being assumed some of the few features of resemblance which do exist between it and them are advanced as evidence that the passage in which they occur was not written by the author who wrote the rest, because if they were he would be too much like the real Apostle, and more in harmony with the other Evangelists. It is not said that John's abode was in Jerusalem, but only that he was acquainted with a servant of the High Priest; just as a man who lived in York might be known to people in London, or have a private friend in Buckingham Palace. He would not necessarily be a person of distinction because he had.

" 7. The visible return of Jesus (*till I come*, verse 22) is " unlike the evangelist, who resolves that return into the " paraclete's presence."

Here, again, the former remark applies. We have a point of resemblance between this Evangelist and the others in this very expression. Are we to take it for what it is worth in the way of evidence, or reckon it among the reasons for tearing away the last chapter from those which precede it? What proof is there that the writer of the former chapters would not have made use of this expression? It is plain that similar principles of criticism would lead us to reject any analogous expressions, if they occurred; as indeed it is proposed to do with v. 28, 29; vi. 39, 40, 44; xii. 48, p. 457. It is manifestly not true that the fourth Evangelist resolves Christ's return into the Paraclete's presence, for he is most careful to distinguish between Christ and the Paraclete, xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26;

xvi. 14, 15. One might say with truth that the return of Christ is but darkly alluded to except in passages that are regarded as doubtful by criticism, but one certainly cannot say that Christ's return is resolved in the presence of the Paraclete.

"8. The scene is Galilee, of which there is no mention "in the previous record of the appearances of the risen "one. The evangelist usually specifies Galilee when "Jesus and his disciples are there (i. 43; iv. 3, 43; vi. 1; "vii. 1); he does not say here that they went to that dis- "trict."

Though Galilee has not been named in connection with the risen Jesus, it has been mentioned in connection with His life. If it was a fact that our Lord said He would meet His disciples in Galilee, it is not inherently improbable that He should have done so under these circumstances, and in that case no just inference can be drawn about the authorship of this chapter from the fact that no *other* appearance of the risen Jesus in Galilee has been mentioned. The real question is, Did our Lord or did He not appear in Galilee under the circumstances here recorded? If He did not, then there is something more involved than a mere question as to authorship. The question is plainly one of belief or unbelief in a matter of fact. Does not the statement, "After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias," imply that both He and they had gone to that district? The objection is futile. It is very important to bear in mind here that the sea of Galilee is called the sea of Tiberias only by St. John, once in this place and twice in the sixth chapter. Is it conceivable that another writer, intending to supplement the Gospel, would be so scrupulously careful to employ in the twenty-first chapter the very name which had before been used by the Evangelist whose work

he supplemented, more particularly when that Evangelist had already used both names, and had adopted *this* merely as the alternative name, vi. 1 ? In other words, the use of the same name in the last chapter, as had been used before in the sixth, is a corroborative point in the evidence that both chapters were by the same hand, for it is not likely that any man supplementing the Gospel would have designedly adopted this particular name.

"9. The explanation given in xxi. 20, 'which also leaned "on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that "betrayeth thee?' is superfluous from one who had written "xiii. 25."

If intended as an *explanation*, it is of course superfluous, but is it not evident that its intention is other than explanatory ? On the former occasion Peter had asked John to inquire of Jesus, in consequence of his near and intimate relation to Him, who should be the traitor. Peter now remembers this circumstance, and having just had his own future career disclosed to him, he naturally asks, "Lord, and what shall this man do" which also leaned upon thy breast at supper ? The explanation lay dormant in the mind of Peter, but John inserts it in his own narrative, instead of putting it into the words of Peter, not to explain his own statement, but to account for Peter's question. The integrity of the last chapter is shown by the 14th verse, which plainly assumes unbroken continuity with the previous narrative. We cannot, therefore, acquit the author of the last chapter of the deliberate intention of supplementing the former chapters, while the attestation in v. 24, conjoined with the use of οἶμαι in v. 25, shows that the writer is the narrator, and the narrator "that disciple whom Jesus loved."

It is, moreover, somewhat remarkable that, regarded even in the light of a superfluous explanation, this state-

ment finds its exact parallel in the earlier portion of the Gospel. In ch. xviii. 14, it would be quite as reasonable to say that the explanation, "Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people," is superfluous from one who had written xi. 49, 50, 51; and yet, whether superfluous or not, it is given, and, being given, is precisely parallel to the case in point. He who wrote the one could most assuredly have written also the other. Cf. also i. 40, vi. 8; and vi. 71, xiii. 2, 26; iii. 2, vii. 50.

"10. One purpose of the writer of this chapter discovers "itself in the relation between the apostles Peter and "John. To the former is assigned the headship of the "Church, 'feed my sheep;' the latter is a spiritual media- "tor between the Lord and his Church, 'that he tarry till "I come.' The honour of martyrdom belongs to the one; "that of calm, continued spiritual existence to the other. "But this purpose is only subordinate to the more general "one, the attestation of the gospel by referring it to an "apostle. It is probable that the work was at first under- "valued by Jewish-christians, because of the inferior posi- "tion which Peter occupies in it. Hence the author of "the appendix brings Peter into prominence, yet without "disparagement to John, 'If I will that he tarry till I "come, what is that to thee?'"

The justice of these observations must, of course, depend upon the opinion of the reader; many probably will fail to see it. At least it is certain that Simon Peter occupies no inferior position in the earlier part of the Gospel: he is frequently mentioned oftener even than any "other disciple," i. 40-44; vi. 8, 68; xiii. 6-9, 24, 36; xviii. 10, 27; xx. 2-6. The prominence of Peter is shown not only in the circumstances related of him, but also in the fact that Andrew is spoken of as his "brother," *his*

"brother" being confessedly more distinguished than Andrew himself.

"11. The narrative has a minuteness of detail and a "specification of numbers which show a striving after "vividness without attaining it. The clearness and gene- "rality of the evangelist's manner are absent."

And yet this Evangelist has preserved certain details of the miracle of the loaves and fishes that the other three have omitted—*e.g.* the names of the disciples who were foremost to speak, the fact that it was a "lad" with whom the loaves and fishes were found, that there was "much grass" in the place, and that the gathering up of the fragments was in obedience to the express command of Jesus. There is a certain "striving after vividness" here, and in "the servant's name was Malchus," which is not unlike the mentioning of the disciples who were on the sea of Galilee by name, and of the exact number of the "great fishes." So with the distance of Bethany from Jerusalem, "fifteen furlongs," xi. 18; the time Lazarus had been in the grave, "four days;" the specification of the particular disciple on various occasions who said or did anything; the statement put into the mouth of Philip, that "two hundred" pennyworth of bread would be required for the hungry multitude; the fact that Bethesda had "five" porches; that it was "Solomon's porch" of the temple in which Jesus walked at the "feast of the dedication;" when it was "winter;" and others of the same kind. All these things show that the mind of the Evangelist was very strongly marked by that faculty which is known to phrenologists as "individuality," the very faculty indeed which would perhaps partly account for his impression, supposing it to be nothing more than an impression, that he of all the twelve was "that disciple whom Jesus loved."

"12. The language differs from that of the gospel. Thus

" we find ἔρχεσθαι σύν (3) for ἀκολουθεῖν; νῦν put after the verb
" (10), but precedes the imperative elsewhere; φέρειν instead
" of ἄγειν (18); πρωΐας γενομένης (4) for πρωΐ; ὑπάγω with the
" infinitive (3); παιδία (5) for τέκνα; ὁ μαρτυρῶν (24) for ὁ
" μεμαρτυρηκώς; ἰσχύειν (6) for δύνασθαι; ἐπενδύτης (7) for ἱμά-
" τιον or χιτών; ἐπιστραφείς (20) for στραφεὶς εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω; στῆναι
" εἰς (4) for ἐπί; ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν for ἀναστὰς ἐκ νεκρῶν (14);
" and οἶμαι (25), αἰγιαλός, ἁλιεύειν, ἀποβαίνειν, ἀριστᾶν, βόσκειν,
" γηράσκειν, ἐξετάζειν, ζωννύναι, κατὰ distributively, μακράν, πῆχυς,
" ποιμαίνειν, προσφάγιον, σύρειν, τολμᾶν are peculiar to the chapter.
" Τί πρός σε seems to be taken from Matt. xxvii. 4.

This list, formidable as it seems, will not bear investigation. In many cases the phrases given are not synonymous—*e.g.* in v. 3, " we also go with thee," is manifestly not equivalent to " we will follow thee," and both the words are used conjointly in xx. 6. νῦν follows the imperative in ii. 8. In v. 18 MS. D reads ἀπάγουσιν. Cf. also the use of φέρειν in xix. 39, xx. 27. As for v. 4, some MSS. read πρωΐα in xviii. 28. Anyhow, πρωΐ is only twice used, in St. John xviii. 20, and xx. 1. The Rev. W. Pound has drawn a distinction in meaning between the two words, " Story of the Gospels," vol. ii. p. 448. ὑπάγω is used with an *imperative* in iv. 16, and ix. 7; it is itself an infinitive after an imperative in xi. 44, and xviii. 8. As therefore it could not be followed by an imperative in v. 3, there is no grammatical or linguistic reason why it should not take an infinitive if necessity required, as is plainly the case. Such construction, therefore, proves nothing. παιδίον is used by St. John iv. 49, xvi. 21, and τέκνα is only found in the Gospel three times. With respect to *v.* 24, the present participle and the past tense of this verb μαρτυρῶ are used of the same person and subject in v. 32, and v. 37. In point of fact, the words, " This is the disciple who *is testifying* of these things and *hath written* these things," taken

in connection with "he who hath seen it *hath borne testimony*, and his testimony is true, and he knoweth that he *saith* true," show very nearly complete indentity of usage, and indicate with unmistakeable precision the intention of the writer to identify himself with the beloved disciple, whoever that disciple was. ἰσχύειν and δύνασθαι are both used by the other Evangelists, and therefore might be used by this Evangelist. Here he had special occasion for a word denoting *physical*, and not moral strength, and therefore availed himself of ἰσχύειν. The same remark applies to ἐπενδύτης, a special word found nowhere else in the New Testament. στραφεὶς εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω is only once used, in xx. 14. The writer had before used στραφείς above, in i. 38. Why did he not use the same phrase again? or why, having used two, should he not have used a third here, having likewise used this very word in a moral sense (acc. to MSS.) in xii. 40? In v. 4, some MSS. have ἐπί for εἰς. The verb is also used with ἐν and πρὸς in St. John, as well as with other prepositions, so that its usage here shows nothing. ἐγείρειν ἐκ νεκρῶν is really the Johannine phrase, see ii. 19, 20, 22; v. 21; xii. 1, 9, 17. The other is only used once, in xx. 9, except in the sixth chapter where the verb is transitive. The fact that certain words are peculiar to the twenty-first chapter is of no importance in itself, unless, on other grounds, the circumstances related are such as the previous writer can not have added, because the relation of the circumstances gives occasion for using the words. Most of these words are found in the other Gospels, some as προσφάγιον, ὄψιμαι are not found elsewhere in the New Testament. None of them are so uncommon as to prove a different author. Some words in the chapter are peculiar to St. John, as ἀνθρακιά, ὀψάριον, διαζώννυμι. πιάζω is used eight times in the fourth Gospel, once in the Apocalypse, twice in the Acts, and once in 2 Cor., but nowhere

else in the New Testament. We are therefore in a position to affirm that the linguistic phenomena of this chapter are certainly not unfavourable to the belief that it proceeded from the same writer as the earlier chapters, whether or not he was St. John.

Nevertheless, Dr. Davidson further says, "These considerations sufficiently show another hand than the "evangelist's. Difference of time, without difference of "authorship, will not account for the characteristics of the "chapter. Not merely is the gospel ratified but added to "in another spirit. And the idea that the same person "attested his own work at a later period of life, is a "modern hypothesis. Peter and John were both dead "when verses 19-23 were written. Probably a Jewish-"christian, before the end of the second century, wrote "the supplement. No MS. is so ancient as to want it. "Perhaps several small interpolations in the gospel have "proceeded from the same hand. Expressions occur here "and there which do not suit their context nor the "general spirit of the work. Were the author consistent "with himself, we might assign various clauses and verses "to a later hand, perhaps to that which wrote the 21st "chapter, where the Jewish-christian point of view re-"specting the Lord's coming is taken; such as v. 28, 29; "the clause 'and I will raise him up at the last day,' in "vi. 40, 44; and 'at the last day,' vi. 39; xii. 48; but this "assumption of Scholten's is somewhat arbitrary."

It is a strange hypothesis that John was dead when this chapter was written. The natural inference would seem to be the contrary. One cannot understand why "a Jewish-christian" should write a supplement to a work that "was at first undervalued by Jewish Christians," nor how his doing so in this way would have had the desired effect. It is, moreover, absolutely impossible to believe with

Scholten that the expressions alleged are interpolations, because they cannot be spared from the context; but being retained, the light they throw upon "if I will that he tarry till I come," is by no means inconsiderable. Our conclusion, therefore, is that, until more cogent reasons than these have been advanced, we see no sufficient ground for believing that the last chapter of St. John's Gospel was by a different hand. It is possible to say that St. John did not write the fourth Gospel, or that an eyewitness did not write it, but it is not possible to say that the person who did write it did not wish to pass for an eyewitness. Furthermore, the evidence is distinctly in favour of the last chapter having been written by the same hand as the rest, but if so, it is impossible to deny that the writer claims to be both an eyewitness and the particular disciple whom Jesus loved. The question therefore is, how far his claim is valid, and how far he has imposed upon mankind; because to say that his claim being invalid he did not desire or intend to impose upon mankind, is simply to say that he wrote in attestation of his own identity what he did not intend or wish to be believed, which is absurd.

II. With respect to the narrative of the woman taken in adultery, the difficulties about it have been amply stated by Davidson and Alford. On the other side the Rev. W. Pound, "Story of the Gospels," vol. ii. p. 277, may be consulted. It certainly cannot be said to be out of place here as *he* has arranged the Gospel narrative; and with Alford the point that weighs most seems to be the fact that tradition inserts it *here* instead of other places which, according to him, it would appear to suit better. Davidson says, "The simple truthfulness of the "story stamps it with credibility, and points to early evan- "gelical tradition as its source." Upon examination, the

linguistic features mentioned by Davidson lose much of their weight when we consider that the event recorded is confessedly unique in our Lord's life, and, therefore, gives occasion for a special phraseology—a phraseology which we cannot assume was beyond the reach of the Evangelist under the circumstances, or beyond the compass of his vocabulary. *e.g.* The Evangelist nowhere uses the word *βαπτίζω* except in the opening chapters, and once in the tenth chapter, in alluding to what is there said. He nowhere uses the word *βάπτειν* nor the word *ψωμίον* but in the thirteenth chapter, for the simple reason that he had no occasion to use them. Many of the words in chap. xii. are peculiar to that chapter for a like reason; but what does this prove? Just so much as we choose to think it proves, and no more. And yet these words are numerous, *e.g.* *διακονεῖν, συνανακειμένων, νάρδος, πιστικός, πολύτιμος, πιπράσκειν, τριακοσίων, ἐνταφιασμός, τὰ βαΐα τῶν φοινίκων, ὀνάριον, κόκκος τοῦ σίτου, βρυντὴ, πῶλος, ὑπάντησις, τετύφλωκεν, πεπώρωκεν, τὰ βαλλόμενα, νοεῖν, βραχίων, εὐλογεῖν,* and *ὀσμή*. Now, here is a vocabulary of some twenty words or more, not one of which is found in any other chapter of the Gospel; but shall we argue from this fact that *this* chapter does not belong to the Gospel, that it was inserted by some one else? Surely this would be an extremely rash conclusion; but as far as the use of words can go the two cases are exactly parallel. It is futile, therefore, to insist upon the difference of language as conclusive against the integrity of this passage. It is not so. One and the same author may well have written it.

Another point is alleged, viz. that strangulation and not stoning was the punishment for adultery, and that this fact tells against the passage in question. But it is no solution of this difficulty to surmise that the passage was not written by St. John; for the blot remains, if it be a

blot, whoever the writer was. If, on the other hand, it is advanced as an objection to the historical credibility of the narrative, that is a question altogether independent of the question of authorship, and one, we may add, which is in no way affected by any solution of the former question. Indeed, on *this* point the internal evidence of the passage must be felt to be conclusive. It cannot have been a mere fabrication. No one would have ventured to represent our Lord as acting thus at the time when the passage is known to have existed, *e.g.* before the time of Jerome, to say nothing of the extreme improbability of any second-rate author conceiving a story so *true* and so original. Many critics seem to forget that their objections are of equal weight whoever wrote the passage. It may be questioned whether the testimony of the writer, whoever he was, to the *practice* of the Jews in our Lord's time, is not at least as good as that of the Talmud to the traditional interpretation of the *law*.

We conclude, therefore, that on internal grounds, which are those mainly relied on by critics, there is not sufficient reason for rejecting either of the passages under discussion.

It is not necessary to do more than allude to the disputed words at v. 3, 4.

## NOTE C.

### FEATURES COMMON TO THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS.

We must begin by at once admitting the great difference between the Apocalypse and the Gospel or Epistles of St.

John. It is obvious and undeniable. The question is whether there are not points of similarity no less undeniable if not so obvious, and whether or not these points are sufficiently important to be indications of identity of authorship. It has been shown in the Lectures that the first Epistle in some respects approaches nearer to the Apocalypse than the Gospel does; and in one instance there is a resemblance traceable in the third Epistle which is not found elsewhere, namely, in the use of the word ἐκκλησία, which occurs three times there but not at all in the Gospel. Taking, then, these three Epistles as generically related, there is a link here connecting them with the Apocalypse which contains letters to the seven *churches*. The word finds no place in the Gospel or the first two Epistles because the writer had no occasion for it, but it was a word he might have used, alien as it seems to be from his ordinary line of thought, and thus in the third Epistle we find him using it; which, whether it be his or not, belongs, at any rate, to the same class of writings. Again, in the first three chapters of the Apocalypse we find this word occurring frequently, but never afterwards till xxii. 16. This is a trifling indication of the way in which the Epistles of St. John hold a mid position between the fourth Gospel and the Revelation.

The similarities between the Apocalypse and the Gospel, so far as they exist, are those of (1.) thought, (2.) manner, or (3.) expression. It is similarities of thought and teaching that are chiefly dwelt upon in the Lectures, and these are of course the most important. They will, moreover, not fail to occur to every reader who is careful to observe them. Among these similarities of thought we may perhaps mention an evident familiarity with and frequent reference to the Old Testament, and more particularly to the books of Moses. The opening of the Gospel irresistibly reminds one of the

opening of the Pentateuch. "In the beginning . . . God said, Let there be light: and there was light." "The same was in the beginning with God . . . in him was life and the life was the light of men." "The Law was given by *Moses*." "Art thou *that prophet?*" "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man,"—being the only allusion in Scripture to the dream of Jacob. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." "Near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph." "Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert." "Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers." "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man;" the reference possibly being to Lev. xxv. 42, "They are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as bondmen." "Before Abraham was I am," &c.

Now let us turn to the Revelation. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God," cf. xxii. 2. "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac, to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." "There was a rainbow round about the throne,"—the only allusion to the rainbow in the Old Testament is Gen. ix. and Ezek. i. 28. "Thou hast *created* all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were *created*." "Behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book." The enumeration of the tribes in chap. vii. The allusion to "the great river Euphrates," ix. 14; Gen. xv. 18. "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan,

which *deceiveth* the whole world," Gen. iii. 13. "And they sing the song of *Moses* the servant of God." "And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them," &c. &c.

The phrase "till I come," St. John xxi. 22, 23, finds its parallel in Rev. ii. 5, 25; iii. 11; xxii. 7, 20.

The mention of individual love in the Revelation is remarkable when that book is regarded as the work of the disciple whom Jesus loved. See i. 3, "Unto him that *loved* us," &c. ii. 4, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first *love*." iii. 9, "I will make them. . . . to know that I have *loved* thee." 19, "As many as I *love* I rebuke and chasten." "The *beloved* city," xx. 9. Cf. also 3 John 9. "Diotrephes, who *loveth* to have the pre-eminence," (ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων) and Rev. xxii. 15. "Whatsoever *loveth* and maketh a lie" (ὁ φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος).

It is needless to draw attention to the special prominence of *love* in the Epistles of St. John.

In St. John's Gospel our Lord's discourses frequently begin, as every one knows, with the double Amen, a feature which they lack in the synoptical Gospels. What shall we say, then, with reference to this matter to the name which is given to Jesus, only in the Apocalypse, of "The Faithful Witness?" i. 5. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Cf. St. John i. 1) iii. 14; "and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True," xix. 11. Cf. also "these sayings are faithful and true," xxi. 5; xxii. 6; and 1 John i. 9. "If we confess our sins he is *faithful* and just to forgive us our sins."

Cf. also the frequent use of Amen in the Apocalypse, *e.g.*, i. 6, 7, 18; v. 14; vii. 12; xxii. 20.

Cf. also Rev. xvii. 14, "They that are with him are

called, and chosen, and faithful," with St. John xv. 16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," &c.

Another point of thought common both to the Gospel and the Apocalypse is the recognition of the sovereignty of the will of God as the ultimate cause of all things, and standard of action, *e.g.*, "My meat is to do the will of God, and to finish his work," iv. 34. "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me," v. 30. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me . . . for I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, That every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life," vi. 37-40. "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him," vi. 44. "No man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father," vi. 65. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine," vii. 17. "The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him," viii. 29. "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him," ix. 3. "If any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth," ix. 31. "I know that his commandment is life everlasting," xii. 50. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," xvii. 2. "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above," xix. 11. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" xxi. 22, &c.

Now, let us compare the teaching of the Revelation. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour,

and power, for thou hast created all things, and *for thy pleasure* they are and were created," iv. 11. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever," xi. 15. "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned," &c., xi. 17. "Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ," xii. 10. "And there was *given* unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and power was *given* unto him . . . And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name . . . and it was *given* unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them, and power was *given* him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations," xiii. 5-7. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus," xiv. 12. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee," xv. 3, 4. (Cf., "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.") "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus," xvi. 5. "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous art thy judgments," xvii. 17. "God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his *will*, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled," xvii. 17. "Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments," &c., xix. 1, 2, &c. Here is acknowledgment of, and acquiescence in, the sovereign will of God.

Belief in the I AM, the Eternal One, of St. John, viii. 58,

pervades the Revelation, *e.g.*, "Grace be unto you and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come," so v. 8, iv. 8, xi. 17, together with the continual ascription of the names to God of "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," i. 8, 11, xxi. 6, xxii. 13; of the phrase, "which liveth for ever and ever," iv. 9, 10; v. 14; x. 6; xv. 7; cf. v. 13; vii. 12; xi. 15; and of the words to Jesus, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for ever more," i. 18, ii. 8. There is no book in Scripture in which the eternity of God is more dwelt upon than in the Revelation, but the eternity of the Word is also the distinctive doctrine of the fourth Gospel.

Futurity is spoken of as "a little while" in the Gospel, xvi. 16, 17, 18, 19. Cf. Rev. vi. 11, "And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season," &c., and the oft repeated statement, "Behold, I come quickly."

A remarkable phrase is used in Rev. vii. 14, κύριέ σὺ οἶδας, which reminds one of the words of Peter to Jesus, xxi. 15, 16, 17, tending, on our supposition, to show the integrity of that chapter. There is also a similarity of thought in the ascription of the word τετέλεσται to Jesus, which is peculiar to St. John xix. 30, and the proclamation "out of the temple of heaven from the throne, saying, It is done, γέγονε," xvi. 17, and again, xxi. 6.

The very striking expression in St. John i. 14, "The Word was made flesh, and *dwelt* among us, ἐσκήνωσεν," finds a parallel no less striking in Rev. xxi. 3, "Behold the tabernacle, ἡ σκηνή, of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, σκηνώσει" (Cf. vii. 15). This is more than similarity of expression, it is similarity of thought; and not only similarity of thought, but identity of expression.

The Judaic prejudices of the Apocalypse are spoken of and contrasted with the Catholic breadth of the fourth

Gospel. Now, can any terms be more hateful than those which, in the Revelation, xi. 8, are, as it would seem, applied to Jerusalem, "the great city which spiritually is called *Sodom* and *Egypt* where also *our Lord was crucified.*" This is surely anti-Judaic; it savours of that deep animosity against the writer's nation which is *said* to characterise the fourth Gospel. On the other hand, the prominence given to the Scriptures, and the prevalent Messianic features which abound in the Gospel, plainly mark the *Judaic* character of that author's mind.

The mention of *thirsting*, applied spiritually in the Revelation, *e.g.*, xxi. 6, xxii. 17, corresponds exactly with the language of the Gospel in iv. 14, vi. 35, vii. 37; and, with the exception of "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," St. Matt. v. 6, which, however, differs materially, there is no corresponding usage in the New Testament.

Analogous to this is the mention of "living water," Rev. vii. 17, xxi. 6, xxii. 1, 17, and St. John, iv. 10, 11, 14, (ter), vii. 38, but nowhere else in the New Testament.

It is characteristic of the Johannine writings, for the writer to allude to the *act of writing* in his own case, *e.g.*, "Many other signs truly did Jesus . . . which are not *written* in the book, but these are *written*," &c., xx. 30, 31. "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and *wrote* these things. . . . And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be *written*, every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be *written*," xxi. 24, 25. "These things *write* we unto you that your joy may be full," 1 John i. 4. "My little children, these things *write* I unto you that ye sin not," 1 John ii. 1. Cf. ii. 7, 8, 13 (ter), 14 (bis), 21, 26, v. 13. So also, in the second Epistle, 5, "Not as though I *wrote* a new commandment unto thee," 12; "having many things to

*write* unto you;" and in the third, 9, "I *wrote* unto the Church;" 13, "I had many things to *write*, but I will not with ink and pen *write* unto thee." Let us now turn to the Apocalypse, i. 3, "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are *written* therein;" 11, "What thou seest, *write* in a book;" 19, "*Write* the things which thou hast seen." Cf. ii. 1, 8, 12, 17, 18; iii. 1, 7, 14; x. 4, (bis); xiv. 13; xix. 9; xxi. 5; xxii. 18, 19.

It cannot be denied that these features are remarkable, characterising as they do all the three classes of Johannine writings; more especially when St. Luke i. 1, is the only instance of the same thing in the synoptical Gospels, and it is not found in the Acts, only twice in the Romans, xv. 15, xvi. 22, and comparatively seldom in the Pauline and other Epistles, where, however, it would naturally occur. When, therefore, it is found in this way in two distinct books *not epistolary*, its occurrence can only be regarded as worthy of remark, if not peculiar.

These are all additional similarities of thought over and above those which have been noticed in the Lectures. They show the same habit of mind and mode of thought, and so far are especially valuable as evidence of possible identity of authorship in two works otherwise confessedly very different.

2. We may now pass on to mention certain instances of similarity in *manner* between the fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse. Many critics regard the latter verses in St. John iii., after *v.* 30, not as the words of the last speaker, the Baptist, but as those of the Evangelist himself. Now, whether they are right or wrong, the very fact of the opinion being held, is sufficient to show that the Evangelist himself has left the point open to question. But precisely

the same thing is discernible in the last chapter of the Revelation, where it is absolutely impossible to determine at what place the words of the angel at *v.* 9 end, and those of the Lord at *v.* 12 begin. In fact, there is a great deal of confusion and uncertainty about the speakers in the whole of that last chapter. There are three distinct speakers, St. John, the Angel, and Jesus, but it is a matter of the very greatest perplexity to decide where the words of each several speaker begin and end. This abrupt transition, then, from the writer's own words to those of others, is another indication of the same *manner* that we have noticed in the fourth Gospel. The same abrupt transition, though there it is more definitely marked and less ambiguous, is equally discernible in the first chapter of the Revelation, in xiv. 9–13, and in other parts of the same book. But we notice precisely the same thing in the narrative of the sixth chapter of the Gospel, 24–59; for the question put to our Lord, *v.* 25, could hardly have been put to Him "in the synagogue as he taught in Capernaum," *v.* 59, but where the point of transition is we cannot tell. Cf. also i. 23, viii. 30–37, &c.

As another instance of similarity of manner, may be mentioned the minute particularity of description which characterises both the Gospel and the Apocalypse. This has before been noticed in the Gospel, [Note A, p. 292]; and in the Revelation we have the numbering of the redeemed of Israel, ch. vii.; the numbering of the army of horsemen, ix. 16; the space overflowed by the blood from the winepress, xiv. 20; the dimensions of the New Jerusalem, xxi. 17, and the like.

Great simplicity and directness of narrative is another obvious mark of similarity of manner in the Gospel and the Revelation.

Though the flow of the narrative is sometimes broken by

parentheses,—*e.g.*, in the Gospel, i. 14; ii. 9; iv. 2, 8; vi. 10, 23; xi. 2, &c. Cf. in the Revelation i. 2, the doxology in 5, 6, 8; ii. 9, 13; ix. 11, (Cf. St. John i. 38, 42; xix. 13; xx. 16), ix. 19; x. 6; xix. 3; xx. 6, &c. &c.

Some of these instances are of trifling importance, but it may perhaps be allowed that they do indicate a certain similarity of *manner* in the two books; and so far as they do, tend to show that they may have proceeded from one and the same mind. Cf. 1 St. John i. 2; iii. 12.

3. We now come to similarities of *expression;* and here it will be convenient to avail ourselves of those which Dr. Davidson (i. 328, ff.) has enumerated with a view to prove the opposite conclusion, in order that the reader may draw his own.

"The *christology* of the Apocalypse is apparently in "unison with that of the gospel. As the latter describes "Jesus to be the incarnate wisdom of God, the former uses "language of similar import, (iii. 14, 20.) His pre-exist-"ence is asserted in the gospel, as it is in Apoc. iii. 14. "The appellation *Word*, distinctive of person, occurs only "in the gospel, first epistle and Apocalypse. And as the "evangelist calls the Word, God, so Jesus bears the name "Jehovah in the book of Revelation.

"Christ, or God, is often termed *the true;* so in the "gospel Christ is called *the true light;* and God is *the true* "*God* in the first epistle.

"In Apoc. ii. 17, Jesus promises believers *the hidden* "*manna;* in the Gospel, *the true bread from heaven*, (vi. 32.)

"Christ is often styled in our book *a lamb*, an epithet "nowhere else applied to him except in the fourth gospel." [This is perhaps hardly accurate: in 1 Pet. i. 19, we have "the precious blood of Christ, *as of a lamb* without blemish and without spot;" it must be remembered that the word

uniformly used in the Revelation is ἀρνίον, while that in the Gospel and in Peter is ἀμνός. It is difficult to account for this diversity, but at any rate the idea is the same.]

" In the Apocalypse, it is said of the Jews who reject " Jesus that they are not *true Jews,* (iii. 9); so in the fourth gospel, (viii. 39, 40.)

" In ii. 11 a promise is made to *him that overcometh,* that " he shall not be hurt by the second death; in the fourth " gospel it is said of *him that keeps Jesus's word,* that he " shall never see death (viii. 51).

" In xiv. 15 a call is addressed to the angel to thrust in " his sickle and reap, because reaping-time is come, and " the harvest of the earth is ripe. So in the gospel Jesus " says to his disciples, 'Look on the fields; for they are " white already to harvest,' iv. 35.

" The favourite expression *to testify,* and *testimony* (μαρ- " τυρέω and μαρτυρία) of the gospel, in the sense of declara- " tion respecting the Saviour, public profession and decla- " ration of belief in him, is common in the Apocalypse. " Compare gospel i. 7, 19; iii. 11, 32, 33; v. 31-36; " viii. 13, 14; xviii. 37; xxi. 24. Epistle v. 9, thrice, 10, " 11. Rev. i. 2, 9; vi. 9; xii. 11, 17; xix. 10; xx. 4; " xxii. 18, 20. [ὁ μαρτυρῶν is peculiar in the New Testament to the Gospel and Apoc. xxii. 20.]

" The use of *to conquer* (νικᾶν), in the sense of overcoming " the evil, opposition, and enmity of the world, with the " implication of remaining faithful and active in the Chris- " tian cause, is peculiar to John and the Apocalypse. Gos- " pel xvi. 33. Epistle ii. 13, 14; iv. 4; v. 4, 5. Apoc. ii. " 7, 11, 17, 26; iii. 5, 12, 21; xii. 11; xiii. 7; xxi. 7.

" *Countenance* (ὄψις), in the sense of human visage, is " only found in gospel xi. 44, and Rev. i. 16.

" *To keep the word* (τηρεῖν τὸν λόγον) is frequent in John's

" gospel and epistle; the same often occurs in the Apo-
" calypse.

" *To tabernacle* (σκηνοῦν) is used in gospel i. 14, and Apoc. vii. 15; xii. 12; xiii. 6; xxi. 3.

" *To slay* (σφάττειν) is employed in epistle iii. 12 twice;
" also in Rev. v. 6; vi. 4, 9, 12; xiii. 3, 8; xviii. 24. It is
" found nowhere else.

" *To have part* (ἔχειν μέρος) is used in gospel xiii. 8; and
" Apoc. xx. 6.

" *To walk with one.* Gospel vi. 66; Apoc. iii. 4.

" *Hereafter* (ἀπαρτί). Gospel i. 52; xiii. 19; xiv. 7; Rev.
" xiv. 13. Elsewhere only in Matthew.

" *To labour* (κοπιάω), in the sense of fatigue. Rev. ii. 3;
" gospel iv. 6.

" *To speak with one* (λαλεῖν μετά τινος). Gospel iv. 27; ix.
" 37; xiv. 30; Rev. i. 12; iv. 1; x. 8; xvii. 1; xxi. 9, 15.
" Not elsewhere, except once in Mark vi. 50.

" *Heaven* (οὐρανός), in the gospel and epistle, has almost
" always the article; less frequently elsewhere. The like
" remark may be made as to *Christ* (ὁ Χριστός).

" *Lord, thou knowest* (κύριε σὺ οἶδας). Gospel xxi. 15-17
" thrice; Rev. vii. 14.

" *He answered, saying* (ἀπεκρίθη λέγων). Gospel i. 26;
" x. 33; Rev. vii. 13.

" The frequent use of *light, to enlighten, glory, to appear*
" (φῶς, φωτίζω, δόξα, φαίνω), and the like, in a tropical sense,
" in the gospel, epistle, and Apocalypse, shows a simi-
" larity of colouring in the style.

" The comparison of Christ with the bridegroom in
" gospel iii. 29, should be placed by the side of Rev. xix.
" 7; xxi. 2; xxii. 17, chiefly on account of the diction.
" So of the water of life. Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 17; and
" gospel iv. 10; vii. 37. So of hungering and thirsting.
" Rev. vii. 16; gospel vi. 35. The image of *cup* for suf-

" fering, trial (gospel xviii. 11), is very common in the " Apocalypse. The image of Christ as a shepherd (gospel " x. 1), is presented in Rev. vii. 17.

" *After these things* (μετὰ ταῦτα), for the most part as a " mere formula of transition, is a striking feature of resem- " blance between the Apocalypse and gospel, as gospel iii. " 22; v. 1, 14; vi. 1; vii. 1; viii. 7; xix. 38; xxi. 1. " Apoc. i. 19; iv. 1; vii. 1, 9; ix. 12; xv. 5; xviii. 1; " xix. 1; xx. 3. Luke occasionally employs the same for- " mula, but not with the same frequency.

" The Apocalypse frequently employs Hebrew words, " and then adds a Greek explanation of them, which John " also does in his gospel, as Rev. iii. 14; ix. 11; xii. 9; " xx. 2; xxii. 20; gospel i. 39, 42, 43; ix. 7; xix. 13, 17. " This is occasionally, but not so frequently done else- " where.

" *To write*, followed by the preposition *to* (γράφειν followed " by εἰς) before the noun, signifying the object on which " the writing is made, is peculiar to the apocalypse and " gospel. Apoc. i. 11; gospel viii. 6, 8.

" The doctrine of perseverance is common to both writ- " ings, and is expressed in the same manner. Compare " Rev. iii. 12; epistle ii. 19; gospel vi. 37.

" The use of *to signify* (σημαίνω) deserves notice. Gospel " xii. 33; xviii. 32; xxi. 19; Apoc. i. 1. [These three passages in the Gospel are not without their bearing on the integrity of the last chapter.]

" The neuter gender is used to denote rational beings, in " gospel vi. 37, 39; xvii. 2, 10. So *creature*, (κτίσμα) in " Rev. v. 13; *every*, (πᾶν) xxi. 27.

" John alone has given an account of piercing Jesus's side " with a spear. To this he applies the prediction in Zech. " xii. 10. Apoc. i. 7, exhibits the same version as in the " gospel. And as the version is a new translation, not

"that of the seventy, the same hand appears in both "passages.

"In Apoc. vii. 15, he that sits upon the throne is said *to* "*dwell* among the saints; an idea similar to that in the "gospel, xiv. 23, where the Father and Son are said *to* "*take up their abode* with the believer. The same thought "is in Apoc. iii. 20; xxi. 22; xxii. 5.

"The manner of writing in the Apocalypse often reminds "one of that in the fourth gospel and first epistle, where "the same idea is expressed, both positively and negatively; "and a certain parallelism of thought and expression may "be noticed."—Vol. i. p. 332.

It will be observed from these remarks that in a few instances I have been anticipated in what I have already said, but it matters little and could scarcely fail to be so. And it must be borne in mind that this last is the testimony of one who believes the Apocalypse to have been written by St. John, and *therefore* holds that the Gospel was *not*, because of its inherent difference. The unbiassed reader may perhaps come to the conclusion that there is at least room for another inference, or, at any rate, that the evidence is not so overwhelming as to leave us no alternative choice of opinion.

The grammatical peculiarities of the Apocalypse are thus summed up by Davidson, i. 339.

"With respect to *cases*, the unusual licence is taken of "discontinuing the genitive for a nominative, as in iii. 12; "xiv. 12 (τῆς καινῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἡ καταβαίνουσα, κ.τ.λ.—τῶν ἁγίων "οἱ τηροῦντες); or the accusative for a nominative, as in xx. 2. "(τὸν δράκοντα, ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος.) In vii. 9 the nominative is "discontinued for the accusative. (ὄχλος . . . ἑστῶτες . . . "περιβεβλημένους) [In some places the readings vary.]

"Greek usage is often violated in *gender* and *number*, as

" in vi. 9, 10; ix. 13, 14. (τὰς ψυχὰς . . . λέγοντες—φωνὴν " . . . λέγοντα.) Neuters plural take plural verbs, xi. 18; " xv. 4. The same nouns are both masculine and feminine " in iv. 3; x. 1; xiv. 19. (ληνός, ἶρις.) In xii. 5 *man child* " (υἱὸς ἄρσην for זָכָר זָכָר) is an imitation of a Hebrew phrase.

" In regard to *verbs*, the apocalyptist uses the future like " the Hebrew imperfect, in a frequentative sense, as at iv. " 9-11. The participle stands for a finite tense in i. 16; " while the present passes into the future in i. 7; or into " the past, xii. 2-4. Future and past tenses are strangely " mixed in xx. 7-10.

" In the syntax of nouns the plural stands regularly for " the dual, as in xii. 14. (δύο πτέρυγες.)

" The genitive is always put after a noun to explain it, " in the manner of an adjective; and a number of adjec- " tives are linked together, as at xvi. 19. (τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ " οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ.)

" Two nouns coupled by a conjunction have each its " own suffix, as in vi. 11 (οἱ σύνδουλοι αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ " αὐτῶν.); ix. 21.

" The repetition of a preposition with each connected geni- " tive often occurs, xvi. 13. (ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ δράκοντος καὶ ἐκ " τοῦ στόματος τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ ψευδοπροφήτου.)

" The genitive absolute seems wanting, unless there be " an example in ix. 9, which is doubtful.

" The preposition *in* (ἐν.) is almost always prefixed to the " dative of the instrument, as in vi. 8.

" The usage of the writer in prepositions and conjunc- " tions is altogether Hebraised. Thus we have the nom- " inative after *as* (ὡς) where another case should have " stood, iv. 7. (ἐχων πρόσωπον ὡς ἄνθρωπος.) This is from a " Hebrew prefix, (כְּ).

" The verb *to teach* (διδάσκειν) is followed by a dative case,

" ii. 14, like the Hebrew (לִפְנֵי), *to avenge* vi. 10, (ἐκδικεῖν ἐκ)
" has a preposition with the genitive equivalent to Hebrew
" usage (בְּעַד מִן) ; and *to follow with* (vi. 8 ἀκολουθεῖν μετά, like
" הָלַךְ אַחַר) is also Hebraic. Greek and Hebrew construc-
" tions are strangely intermingled in xvii. 4. (γέμον
" βδελυγμάτων καὶ τὰ ἀκάθαρτα)."

Whatever may be the explanation of these phenomena we can hardly suppose them to have been the result of grammatical ignorance. They show, perhaps, that the author was *thinking* in Hebrew while he *wrote* in Greek. But surely a man knowing enough Greek to write the Apocalypse could not from mere inadvertence or by mistake have written thus. He must have preferred, for his own reasons, to retain his native idiom. What these reasons may have been we cannot conceive. The fact is a very curious one, but we can hardly suppose that he wrote thus simply because he did not know better how to write. And if so, the existence of this work with these phenomena is quite consistent with the existence of other works by the same author in which such phenomena may be wanting.

The question really is, How far does the existence of these phenomena in the Revelation, which are not found in the Gospel, and are difficult under any supposition to account for, tend to outweigh the no less certain fact of the existence of many remarkable similarities in thought, manner, and expression, when the one is balanced against the other as evidence of an identity of authorship in the two books. The verdict of sober criticism will surely be that this is a matter upon which it is in the highest degree rash to pronounce dogmatically on either side, and that, after all, the common and traditional belief may not im-

probably and still less impossibly be the true one. At any rate, it is certain that if we allow the Apocalypse to be the work of the younger son of Zebedee, the argument which would infer therefrom that the fourth Gospel is not by him is in the highest degree unsatisfactory and inconclusive.

THE END.

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